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L E T T E R S

CONCERNING

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T A S T E.

John Gilbert Cooper.
ΦΥΣΙΣ ἀμαχὸν ΕΡΩΤΑ ἐνέφυσεν ἡμῶν ταῖς
ΨΥΧΑΙΣ παντὸς αἰ τῷ μεγάλῳ, καὶ ὡς
πρὸς ἡμᾶς ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΩΤΕΡΟΥ.

Longin. de Subl. Sect. 35.



L O N D O N :

Printed for R. and J. DODSLEY in Pall-Mall,

M.DCC.LV.

COMPTON





The EDITOR's

ADVERTISEMENT.

I Have often observed that the World is much more inquisitive about the Author of one anonymous Book, that has the least degree of Merit, than about twenty who prefix their Names to better Performances. If it such be the Fate of this Collection, to excite that natural Curiosity in the Reader's Breast, I can at present gratify his desire no farther than by telling him, that these Letters were originally written to a small circle of Friends, here concealed under fictitious Names, who arranged them among themselves,

A 2

before

ADVERTISEMENT.*

before they were given to the Editor, in the following Order. To reveal more would be unnecessary; for an indifferent Performance can receive no *real* Assistance from the Credit of a successful Author's Name, and a good one will never stand in need of it.



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T H E

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1. The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses, which are arranged in two columns. The names are written in a cursive script, and the addresses are written in a more formal, printed style. The list includes names such as "John Smith", "Mary Jones", and "Robert Brown", along with their respective addresses in various cities and states.

LETTERS

CONCERNING

TASTE.

LETTER I.

TO EUPHEMIUS.

WHENCE comes it, EUPHEMIUS, that you, who are *feelingly* alive to each fine Sensation that Beauty or Harmony gives the Soul, should so often assert, contrary to what you daily experience, *that TASTE is govern'd by Caprice, and that BEAUTY is reducible to no Criterion?* I am afraid your Generosity in this Instance is greater than your Sincerity, and that you are willing

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ling to compliment the circle of your Friends, in giving up by this Concession that envied Superiority you might claim over them, should it be acknowledg'd that those uncommon Emotions of Pleasure, which arise in your Breast upon the Observation of moral or natural Elegance, were caused by a more ready and intimate Perception of that universal TRUTH, which the all-perfect CREATOR of this harmonious System ordain'd to be the VENUS of every Object, whether in the Material World; in the imitative Arts; or in living Characters and Manners. How irreconcilable are your Doctrines to the Example you afford us! However, since you press me to justify your Practice against your Declarations, by giving a Definition of what is meant by TASTE; I shall not avoid the invidious Office of pointing out your superior Excellence to others, by proving that TRUTH and BEAUTY are coincident, and that the warmest Admirers of these CELESTIAL TWINS, have consequently Souls more nearly allied

to

to ætherial Spirits of a higher Order. A good TASTE is that instantaneous Glow of Pleasure which thrills thro' our whole Frame, and seizes upon the Applause of the Heart, before the intellectual Power, Reason, can descend from the Throne of the Mind to ratify it's Approbation, either when we receive into the Soul beautiful Images thro' the Organs of bodily Senses ; or the Decorum of an amiable Character thro' the Faculties of moral Perception ; or when we recall, by the imitative Arts, both of 'em thro' the intermediate Power of the Imagination. Nor is this delightful and immediate Sensation to be excited in an undistemper'd Soul, but by a Chain of Truths, dependent upon one another till they terminate in the Source of all Perfection the Divine ARCHITECT of the whole. Let us cast our Eyes first upon the Objects of the Material World. A rural Prospect upon the very first Glance yields a grateful Emotion in the Breast, when in a Variety of Scenes there arises from the whole ONE Order,

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whose different parts will be found, by the critical Eye of Contemplation, to relate mutually to one another, and each examin'd apart, to be productive of the Necessaries, the Conveniencies, and Emoluments of Life. Suppose you was to behold from an Eminence, thro' a small range of Mountains cover'd with Woods, several little Streams gushing out of Rocks, some gently tinkling over Pebbles; others tumbling from a Precipice, and a few gliding gently in Willow-shaded Rivulets thro' green Meadows, till their tributary Waters are all collected by some River God of a larger Urn; who at some few Miles distance is lost in the Ocean, which heaves it's broad Bosom to the Sight, and ends the Prospect with an immense expanse of Waters. Tell me, EUPHEMIUS, would not such a Scene captivate the Heart even before the Intellectual Powers discover Minerals in the Mountains; future Navies in the Woods; Civil and Military Architecture in the Rocks; healing Qualities in the smaller Streams; Fertility,

that

that the larger Waters distribute along their serpentine Banks; Herbage for Cattle in the Meadows; and lastly, the more easy Opportunities the River affords us to convey to other Climates the Superfluities of our own, for which the Ocean brings us back in Exchange what we stand in need of from theirs. Now to heighten this beautiful Landscape, let us throw in Corn Fields, here and there a Country Seat, and, at proper Distances, small Hamlets, together with Spires and Towers, as MILTON describes 'em,

“ bosom'd high in tufted Trees.”

Does not an additional Rapture flow in from this Adjunct, of which Reason will afterwards discover the latent Cause in the same manner as before. Your favorite Architecture will not fail to afford less remarkable Instances, that Truth, Beauty, and Utility are inseparable. You very well know that every Rule, Canon, and Proportion in building did not arise from the capricious Invention of Man, but from the unerring Dictates of Nature, and that

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even what are now the ornamental Parts of an Edifice, originally were created by Necessity; and are still displeasing to the Sight, when they are disobedient, if I may use that moral Expression, to that Order, which Nature, whose Laws cannot be repealed, first gave to supply that Necessity. Here I appeal to your own Breast; and let me continue the Appeal, by asking you concerning another Science analogous to this, which is founded upon as invariable Principles: I mean the Science of living well, in which you are as happily learned as in the former. Say then, has not every amiable Character, with which you have been enamour'd, been prov'd by a cool Examination to contain a *beautiful* Proportion, in the Point it was placed in, relative to Society? And what is it that constitutes Moral Deformity, or what we call Vice, but the Disproportion which any Agent occasions, in the Fabric of Civil Community, by a Non-compliance to the general *Order* which should prevail in it?

As

L E T T E R I. 7

As the Arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Poetry are imitative of these, their Excellence, as ARISTOTLE observes, consists in Faithfulness to their Original: nor have they any *primary* Beauty in themselves, but derive their shadowy Existence in a mimetic Transcript from Objects in the Material World, or from Passions, Characters, and Manners. Nevertheless that *internal Sense* we call TASTE (which is a Herald for the whole human System, in it's three different Parts, the refin'd Faculties of Perception, the gross Organs of Sense, and the intermediate Powers of Imagination) has as quick a Feeling of this secondary Excellence of the Arts, as for the primary Graces; and seizes the Heart with Rapture long before the Senses, and Reason in Conjunction, can *prove* this Beauty by collating the Imitations with their Originals.

If it should be asked *why* external Objects affect the human Breast in this Manner, I would answer, that the ALMIGHTY has in this, as well as in all his other

B 4
Works,

8 L E T T E R I.

Works, out of his abundant Goodness and Love to his Creatures, so *attun'd* our Minds to Truth, that all Beauty from without should make a responsive Harmony vibrate within. But should any of those more curious Gentlemen, who busy themselves with Enquiries into Matters, which the Deity, for Reasons known only to himself, has plac'd above our limited Capacities, demand *how* he has so form'd us, I should refer them, with proper Contempt, to their more aged Brethren, who may justly in Derision be stil'd *the Philosophers of ultimate Causes*. To you, my dear Friend, whose truly philosophical and religious Taste concludes that whatever God ordains is right, it is sufficient to have prov'd that *Truth* is the Cause of all *Beauty*, and that Truth flows from the Fountain of all Perfection, in whose unfathomable Depth finite Thought should never venture with any other Intention than to wander and adore. But I find I have been imperceptibly led on from Thought to Thought, not only to trespass

L E T T E R I. 9

trespass upon the common Stile of a Letter, by these abstruse Reasonings and religious Conclusions, but upon the ordinary length of one likewise; therefore shall conclude by complimenting my own Taste in Characters, when I assure you that I am,

Your most affectionate Friend, &c.

L E T T E R

LETTER II.

To the same.

IT gave me no small Pleasure to find, by your Answer to my last Letter, that you now allow BEAUTY to be the Daughter of TRUTH; and I in my turn will make a Concession to you, by confessing that BEAUTY herself may have *acquir'd* Charms, but then they are altogether such as are consistent with her divine Extraction. What you observe is very true, that the human Form, (the most glorious Object, as you are pleas'd to call it, in the Creation) let it be made with the most accurate Symmetry and Proportion, may receive *additional* Charms from Education, and steal more subtly upon the Soul of the Beholder from some adventitious Circumstances of easy Attitudes or Motion, and an undefineable Sweetness of Countenance, which an habitual Commerce with the more refin'd Part of Mankind super-adds

adds to the Work of Nature. This the antient *Grecian* Artists would have represented mythologically in Painting by the GRACES crowning VENUS. We find how much LELY has availed himself in his shadowy Creations of transcribing from Life this adventitious Charm into all his Portraits. I mean, when he *sole* upon his *animated Canvases*, as POPE poetically expresses it,

“ The sleepy Eye that spoke the melting Soul.”

You will ask me perhaps how I can prove any Alliance of this particular Circumstance of a single Feature to Truth? Or rather triumphantly push the Argument farther and say, Is not this additional Charm, as you call it, inconsistent with the Divine Original of Beauty, since it deadens the fiery Lustre of that penetrating Organ? I chuse to draw my Answer from the Schools of the antient ETHOGRAPHI, who by their enchanting Art so happily convey'd, thro' the Sight, the Lessons of Moral Philosophy. These Sages would have told you, that our Souls
are

are attun'd to one another, like the Strings of musical Instruments, and that the Chord of one being struck, the *Unison* of another, tho' untouch'd, will vibrate to it. The Passions therefore of the human Heart, express'd either in the living Countenance or the mimetic Strokes of Art, will affect the Soul of the Beholder with a similar and responsive Disposition. What wonder then is it that Beauty, borrowing thus the Look of softening Love, whose Power can lull the most watchful of the Senses, should cast that sweet *Nepenthe* upon our Hearts, and enchant our corresponding Thoughts to rest in the Embraces of Desire? Sure then I am, that you will always allow Love to be the Source and End of our Being, and consequently consistent with Truth. It is the Superaddition of such Charms to Proportion, which is called the *Tasteful* in Musick, Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, Gardening and Architecture. By which is generally meant that happy Assemblage which excites in our Minds, by Analogy, some pleasurable Image.

Image. Thus, for Instance, even the Ruins of an old Castle properly dispos'd, or the Simplicity of a rough-hewn Hermitage in a Rock, enliven a Prospect, by recalling the Moral Images of *Valor* and *Wisdom*; and I believe no Man will contend, that *Valor* exerted in the Defence of one's Country, or *Wisdom* contemplating in Retirement for the Welfare of Mankind, are not truly amiable Images, belonging to the Divine Family of Truth. I think I have now reconcil'd our two favorite Opinions, by proving that these *additional* Charms, if they must be called so, have their Origin in Nature as much as Proportion itself.—I am very glad the Prints I sent afforded you so much Pleasure, not only as I wish every thing which comes from me may be favourably receiv'd by you, but as they are likewise a Confirmation of my Arguments; for the Man who drew them is no very great Artist, but being a faithful Disciple of Nature, having delineated every Object in a *Camera Obscura*, he has not fail'd of

gaining

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gaining that uncontested Applause, which
the Followers of that unerring Mistress
will ever receive from Mankind. My
EUDOCIA calls me to administer with her
Comfort to a little fatherless Family in the
District of our Hamlet, therefore must
conclude myself,

— *Your sincere Friend, &c.*

LETTER

[15]
LETTER III.

To the same.

YOU have often heard me make true Conjectures concerning a Man's Taste in Morals, from the Choice of his Pictures or the Disposition of his Gardens. This you at first thought a little whimsical, till repeated Observation and Experience confirm'd, what I advanc'd in a former Letter to you, that the same *internal Sense* tastes for the three different Powers in human Nature; and from hence arises that Correspondence betwixt the *Senses*, *Imagination*, and *Understanding* of the same Person. I had once an Opportunity of observing, in some little Excursions I made a few Years ago, from a celebrated Place in the North of ENGLAND, with a mix'd Company, how variously the different Places we saw affected every Man in our Party according to the natural Turn of his Temper. We had among us an
Inamorato,

16 L E T T E R III.

Inamorato, much given to reading Romances, who dwelt with uncommon Rapture on a little rural Place call'd *H—*, where, it is said, the famous Sir PHILIP SIDNEY compos'd his *Arcadia*. Here Enthusiasm seiz'd our romantic Lover, whilst the rest of our Company felt only the calm Sensation of Pleasure. Nor was it long before it came in my turn to be not *touch'd* but *rapt*, and to *feel* that ætherial Glow of Admiration, at the Sight of a neighbouring Villa to SCARBOROUGH.

/ You know I love the Comforts of domestic Life and the Charms of Contemplation in Retirement; and rather would enjoy the Heart-ennobling Transport which the Discovery of any thing beneficial to Mankind, or one charitable Action could give me, than the *suppos'd* Glories which all the Royal Robbers of the World ever plunder'd from their Species. From this Temper of Mind, mix'd with an Admiration of antient Manners and antient Mythology, you will not wonder that a Place, which answers in Miniature to

ÆLIAN'S

ÆLIAN's ravishing Description of TEMPE, should thus warmly affect me. The Place I mean is called *E— Lodge*. It is a small convenient House, built in the *Tuscan* Order, at the foot of two little Hills, covered with Woods and flowering Shrubs, which for a considerable Way attend the serpentizing Course of a clear cool Rivulet; as if they meant to shade and protect with their Branches the Stream which runs in the Valley betwixt 'em. I could not refrain from bursting forth, in a kind of poetical Extasy, in the Words of our admired Poet,

" Where gliding thro' his Daughter's honor'd Shades,
 " The sooth *Peneus* from his glassy Flood
 " Reflects purpureal *Tempe's* pleasant Scene.
 " Fair *Tempe*, Haunt belov'd of Sylvan Powers,
 " Of Nymphs, and Fauns, where in the golden Age
 " They play'd in secret on the shady Bank
 " With ancient *Pan*: while round their choral Steps
 " Young Hours and genial Gales with constant Hand,
 " Show'r'd Odors, Blossoms, show'r'd ambrosial Dews,
 " And Spring's *Elysian* Bloom. *

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Believe

* *Ælian's Pleasures of Imagination*, Book I.

18 L E T T E R III.

Believe me, EUPHEMIUS, the ancient *Corybantes*, when they heard the sacred Flutes in their religious Mysteries, could not feel or express more Rapture than I did. Retrospection had carried me on the Wings of Imagination two thousand Years back, and had plac'd me in the delightful Regions of *Thessaly*. † I know the sympathizing

† I dare say the Reader will not be displeased to have *ÆLIAN*'s Description of ancient TEMPE, which the Author mentions above, laid before him in the elegant Translation of that ingenious Gentleman, who favour'd the Public a few Years ago with an *English Commentary and Notes on HORACE's Epistle to Augustus, and a Discourse on Poetical Imitation*. "The *Thessalian* TEMPE is a Place, "situate between *Olympus* and *Ossa*; which are Mountains of an exceeding great Height; and look, as if "they had once been joined, but were afterwards separated from each other, by some God, for the Sake "of opening in the midst that large Plain, which stretches "in Length to about five Miles, and in Breadth, a hundred "Paces, or, in some Parts more. Thro' the middle of "this Plain runs the *Peneus*, into which several lesser Currents empty themselves, and, by the Confluence of "their Waters, swell into a River of great Size. This "Vale is abundantly furnish'd with all manner of *Arbors* "and *resting Places*; not such as the Arts of human Industry contrive, but with the Bounty of spontaneous "Nature; ambitious, as it were, to make a Shew of all "her Beauties, provided for the Supply of this fair Residence, in the very original Structure and Formation of "the Place. For there is plenty of Ivy shooting forth in "it, which flourishes and grows so thick, that, like the "generous and leafy Vine, it crawls up the trunks of
" tall

L E T T E R III. 19

sympathizing Warmth of your Imagination, therefore shall leave you to fancy the rest for me. However such were my Expressions of Pleasure upon the Occasion, that several of our Company, who

C 2 had

“ tall Trees, and twisting it's Foilage round their Arms
 “ and Branches, becomes almost incorporated with them.
 “ The flowering *Smilax* also is there in great Abun-
 “ dance; which running up the Acclivities of the Hills,
 “ and spreading the close Texture of its Leaves and Ten-
 “ drils on all Sides, perfectly covers and shades them; so
 “ that no part of the bare Rock is seen: but the whole is
 “ hung with the Verdure of a thick, interwoven Herb-
 “ age, presenting the most agreeable Spectacle to the
 “ Eye. Along the level of the Plain, there are fre-
 “ quent Tufts of Trees, and long continued Ranges
 “ of arching Bowers, affording the most grateful Shel-
 “ ter from the Heats of Summer; which are fur-
 “ ther relieved by the frequent Streams of clear and
 “ fresh Water, continually winding through it. The
 “ Tradition goes that these Waters are peculiarly good for
 “ Bathing, and have many other Medicinal Virtues. In
 “ the Thickets and Bushes of this Dale, are numberless
 “ Singing Birds every where fluttering about, whose
 “ Warblings take the Ear of Passengers, and cheat the
 “ Labours of their Way through it. On the Banks of
 “ the *Peneus*, on either Side, are dispersed irregularly,
 “ those *resting places*, before spoken of; while the River
 “ itself glides through the middle of the Lawn, with a
 “ soft and quiet course; overhung with the Shades of
 “ Trees, planted on it's Borders, whose intermingled
 “ Branches keep off the Sun, and furnish the Opportu-
 “ nity of a cool and temperate Navigation upon it. The
 “ Worship of the Gods, and the perpetual Fragrancy of
 “ Sacrifices and burning Odors, further consecrate the
 “ Place, &c. [Var. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 1.]

20 L E T T E R III.

had not an *Unison* of Soul, began to regard my Enthusiasm with a cool air of Derision. The next Day's Journey however afforded me an Opportunity of making Reprisals, and to pity many of our Party for the joyful Astonishment with which they were struck by the aukward Magnificence of unmeaning Grandeur. You know *the* MANY among Mankind are affected only by *prodigious Actions* and *Deeds of HEROISM* in the Moral World, and, according to my Observation, have consequently a correspondent Relish for the Great and Wonderful in the Physical; ALEXANDER, CÆSAR, and PYRRHUS are their ador'd Images in the one; and *Castles, Mausoleums, Pyramids, Mountains, immense Plains, and Cataracts* in the other. How natural then was it for those who could pass over the Paradise of our *English* TEMPE without Emotion, to gape their silent Wonder at *H— Castle*! I desire you would minutely observe, the next time you take a mixed Company into your elegant Collection

of Pictures, and read their Characters by the choice of their Pieces. The Revengeful will find great Excellence in your APOLLO fleaing the unfortunate MARSYAS; the Man, who is subject to be discompos'd by violent Passions, will select out one of *Vandervelt's* Storms to amuse himself with; and the Eyes of those, who are ennobled by filial Piety and the delightful Sympathy of Pity, will draw a Tear of Pleasure over your *Roman Charity*.—If the Weather will permit I propose to be with you at — next Month, but wherever I am, you will always be present with me. Adieu, my dear EUPHEMIUS, and do me the Justice to think, I am,

Your most sincere Friend, &c.

LETTER IV.

To the Same.

INDEED, EUPHEMIUS, the Compliments you are pleas'd to pay me upon the Observations I made in my last Letter to you concerning Analogy, would not fail to enflame my Vanity, did not I very well know that you view every thing, which comes from me, through the magnifying Medium of Friendship. This Reflection, 'tis true, lessens the Satisfaction which would flow from a Consciousness of Merit, but at the same time augments my Happiness another Way, by informing my Heart how deep an Interest I have in yours. You tell me that upon Recollection, you know of no living Artist whose Life does not greatly correspond to his Performances, and that you have read of very few of the Dead, whose Works do not shadow forth, by this Analogy, the general Cast of their Moral

Con-

L E T T E R IV. 23

Conduct. † HOMER, we are told by the very ingenious and learned Author of his Life, had personally accompanied his Fancy wherever she rov'd upon the Face of the Earth, and I make no Doubt such was the restless Activity of his Soul, that he ardently wish'd to spurn this dull Globe, and soar to the Seats of his Immortals. To contrast his Character, we need only cast our Eyes on his poetical Disciple VIRGIL, whose modest Majesty in private Life bore so great a Resemblance to all his Compositions. But MONSIEUR DE PILES, the ingenious Author of the Lives of the Painters, will furnish us with some remarkable Examples to this Purpose. I dare say you have often observ'd, that several Pieces of MICHAEL ANGELO's, which you have seen in ITALY, tho' finish'd in a *grand goût*, and with a

C 4

vast

† VOLTAIRE has the following remarkable Passage concerning the Character and Writings of the Cardinal de Retz. Cet homme singulier s'est peint lui-meme dans ses memoires, ecrits avec un air de grandeur, une impetuosité de genie, et une inégalité, qui font l'Image de sa conduite. Dans le siecle de Louis XIV. vol. 1. p. 61.

vaſt Extent of Genius, want that Purity, Softneſs, and Elegance, which afford ſo much Pleaſure in the Works of ſeveral much inferior Painters. There is a Fierceneſs in the Looks, and a Wildneſs in the Attitudes of all his Figures, which, tho' they are indeed correct, and agreeable to Nature in ſome Moods, and cannot be condemned by the Judgment, are by no Means agreeable to the Eye, and tho' they fully ſatiſfy the Underſtanding, never captivate the Heart.—You might obſerve at the ſame time, on the contrary, that RAPHAEL's, for want of the Uſe of the *Chiaro Oſcuro*, had not that Prominency, nor ſeem'd to come out from the Canvaſs ſo boldly as thoſe of his Rival; that he was rather deficient in Colouring, and preſerv'd too great a Sameneſs in the Drapery of all his Figures; yet nevertheless blending the Elegance of the Antique and the Simplicity of Nature together, and ſpreading that undefineable *Grace*, which was ſo bounteouſly beſtow'd upon him, over every Piece, he ſeizes at once upon the
warm

warm Applause of the Heart by an irresistible Force, and the Judgment fearfully suspends the Exercise of her Faculties over the seeming Deficiencies at a distance, as if each Stroke was the immediate Inspiration of Heaven, and there was nothing left for the human Mind to do, but to wonder and adore. Now if we look into the Lives of these two eminent Painters, we shall observe in them a corresponding Similarity to the different Defects and Excellencies in their respective Performances. The first, MICHAEL ANGELO, lived in the most reclusive manner, was strict even to the greatest Severity in his Morals, and gave himself entirely up to the Cultivation of the Arts he profess'd. Notwithstanding, all his Actions were blameless, nay rather commendable, when examin'd only by the Rules of Moral Rectitude; yet wanting that Ease and gentle Deportment, which an habitual Intercourse with Mankind imperceptibly gives us, he was so displeasing in Conversation that he was avoided

voided at last by every Acquaintance, and, whilst RAPHAEL'S House [was crowded with Friends and Disciples, the World willingly left him to the Enjoyment of his belov'd Solitude. RAPHAEL, on the contrary, was a Man of the World, violently addicted by his Constitution to Pleasure, but more particularly to the Love of Women, insomuch that having, we are told, one Day abandon'd himself to the Enjoyment of several, he was taken ill of a burning Fever, and, concealing the Cause of his Distemper from the Physicians, he was carried off in the thirty-seventh Year of his Age, to the unspeakable Grief of all who knew the Man, or admir'd the Artist. Notwithstanding these human Infirmities, he possess'd such a natural and acquir'd Sweetness of Temper, and Complacency in Behaviour, so Analogous || to that undefineable Grace in his Painting,

|| The dark gloomy Colouring we find in the Pieces of the *Bassans*, arose from the Horror of their distemper'd Imaginations,

— “ That

Painting, that he was universally belov'd by all who knew him, and the severest Moralist was charm'd with his Conversation tho' he condemn'd his Conduct. * I cannot help observing in this place, and I hope it is not foreign to the Subject, that frequent Conversation with Women harmonizes the Souls of Men, and gives 'em that enchanting Grace, which has so often delighted us both in the Address of several of our Acquaintance, not very eminent for their Virtues or Understanding. I am of Opinion, it was this constant Idea of Delicacy and Softness, collected,

————— " That surly Spirit Melancholy

" Had bak'd their Blood and made it heavy thick. "

Shakespear's K. John.

Therefore they made Choice of such Objects to paint, as were responsive to the internal Shade in their Minds, particularly Night-Pieces, where their Souls poured forth their unconstrain'd Dispositions upon the Canvass, and indulged in beloved Darkness. Whenever they were, against their Choice, employ'd upon other Subjects, the strong Shades lower'd upon every Landscape, and even the cheerful Light of the Sun itself was greatly obscur'd by Geniuses which naturally delighted in his Absence.

* In the two Characters of MICHAEL ANGELO, and RAPHAEL, this Observation of *Quintilian's* was verifi'd, In quibusdam virtutes non habent gratiam, in quibusdam vitia ipsa delectant. Lib. II. cap. 3.

lected from an habitual Intercourse with these fair Polishers of our Sex, and united into one complicated Form of Beauty, which, playing perpetually in the Soul of RAPHAEL, diffus'd itself thro' his Pencil over all his Works; and thro' his Looks, Deportment, and Tongue, over all his Words and Actions. Such, by the Appointment of Heaven, has ever been, and ever will be the Power of these heavenly Creatures! — I have so much Vanity to think you will read the latter part of this Letter to AMELIA, that every one, who esteems you, may in a great measure hereafter seem to pay her a kind of an indirect Compliment. She has often told me, you know, that I am one of the loyalest Subjects the Sex ever had, and, I dare say, will not be displeas'd with this fresh Proclamation of their Dominion. You may add farther, that I think Women are the Fountains from whence flow the blended Streams of Taste and Pleasure, and that the Draught of Life is more or less sweet as they are mingled in the Cup. Adieu.

LET-

L E T T E R V.

To the Same.

YOU seem to think, EUPHEMIUS, that I contradicted in Conversation the other Day, in a great measure what I advanc'd in a former Letter to you, by allowing CRONOPHILUS to be a Man of a strong Understanding and great Erudition, and yet at the same time asserting he had little or no *Taste*. But according to my Observation, what I wrote, and what I said, are very reconcileable. For *Taste* does not *wholly* depend upon the natural Strength and acquir'd Improvement of the *Intellectual* Powers; nor *wholly* upon a fine Construction of the *Organs* of the Body; nor *wholly* upon the intermediate Powers of the *Imagination*; but upon a Union of them all happily blended, without too great a Prevalency in either. Hence it falls out, that one Man may be a very great Reasoner; another have the finest Genius for Poetry;

etry; and a third be blest'd with the most delicate Organs of Sense; and yet every one of these be deficient in that *internal* Sensation called *Taste*. On the contrary, a fourth, in whose Frame indulgent Nature has twisted this *triple Cord*, shall feel it constantly vibrate within, whenever the same *Unison* of Harmony is struck from without; either in the original Works of Nature; in the mimetic Arts; or in Characters and Manners. That worthy Man, and amiable Writer, Mr. ADDISON, was no *great* Scholar; he was a very indifferent Critic, and a worse Poet; yet from the happy Mixture, just mention'd, he was blest'd with a Taste truly delicate and refin'd. This render'd him capable of distinguishing *what were* Beauties in the Works of others, tho' he could not account so well *why they were so*, for want of that deep Philosophical Spirit which is requisite in Works of Criticism. He likewise translated the Poetical Descriptions of OVID very elegantly and faithfully into his own Language, tho' he

he fell infinitely short of 'em in his own original Compositions, for want of that *unconstrain'd* Fire of Imagination which constitutes the true Poet. Hence we may be enabled to account for that peculiar Fatality which attends Mr. ADDISON's Writings, that his Translations seem Originals, whilst his own Compositions have the confin'd Air of Translations. Nor think I exemplify too far by observing, that your Friend POPE was a better Translator than he was a Poet. Many Instances might be produc'd from his Translation of the ILIAD to prove the Truth of this Assertion. One I will particularly mention, which is the sublime Description of NEPTUNE in the 13th Book.

" In *Samothracia* on a Mountain's Brow,
 " Whose waving Woods o'er hung the Deeps below,
 " He fate ; and round him cast his Azure Eyes
 " Where *Ida*'s misty Tops confus'dly rise ;
 " Before fair *Ilion*'s glitt'ring Spires were seen ;
 " The crouded Ships, and sable Seas between.
 " There from the crystal Chambers of the Main
 " Emerg'd he fate ; and mourn'd his *Argives* slain.

" At

32 L E T T E R V.

“ At Jove incens’d with Grief and Fury stung,
 “ Prone down the steepy Rock he pour’d along,
 “ Fierce as he pass’d the lofty Mountains nod,
 “ The Forests shake, Earth trembled as he trod,
 “ And felt the Footsteps of th’ immortal God.” }

I chose to select this Passage in Preference to any other, as the Original is a favorite One with LONGINUS, the most tasteful of the ancient Critics. In my Opinion the Translation is not at all inferior to the Original. From which you may infer that I do not degrade Mr. POPE, tho’ I say he is a better Translator than he is a Poet.—I have this Morning read over the *Latin* Poem you sent me, which gave me no small Entertainment. The Author has shew’d himself to be a tasteful Master of the Stiles of LUCRETIVS, HORACE, and VIRGIL, but more particularly of the former, all which he has elegantly blended, or, as his Subject occasionally requir’d, us’d separately. I thank you likewise for the two Translations of the same Poem, tho’ I must confess they did not give me equal Satisfaction,

tion, if any at all. If the two Gentlemen, who have charitably undertaken to *do* it into English, for the Benefit of those who don't understand the Original, had possess'd *Taste* or even common Judgment enough, to have distinguish'd that the chief Merit of that Poem consists in the Language of it, they would have spent their Time much better by a more proper Application of their respective Talents, which have deservedly rais'd both their Characters, not only in their different Professions, but in the World of Letters. Mr. ——— writes me word he has a Letter by him from Count MAFFEI concerning VOLTAIRE's, and HILL's MEROPE, which I want much to see. When you write next pray tell me whether the little Groupe of Figures, I invented for you, is yet executed in basso relievo by our favourite Artist GOSSET. Adieu.

D

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

To the Same.

I Find, EUPHEMIUS, you don't thoroughly concur with me in a Remark I made in my last Letter, that " ADDISON " was an indifferent Critic, and a worse " Poet." But however extensive my Regard to the Memory of that great and good Man may be, and however inimitable and certainly *justly* admir'd he ever will be as a Prose Writer, for those moral and humorous Essays, but more particularly those delightful Allegories his Muse CLIO has left us; yet true Criticism will never allow him to be at the Head even of the second Class of our *English* Poets. You answer that there are several Passages in some of his Poetical Compositions, which breathe a Spirit of Genius equal to any thing extant, either among the Moderns or Ancients; and at the same time, point out the famous Simile of the Angel
of

of Destruction, if I may so call it, in the *Campaign*; and another at the Conclusion of the first Act of *Cato*. Now tho' selecting *particular* Passages from a Poet is not a certain Method, nor a fair one, of forming a proper Estimate of his *general* Excellence, yet as you so strongly urge these two, with an Air of Triumph, to be the Inspiration of *Castalian* Streams, I must desire you to examine 'em with me critically Line by Line, and I dare say you'll own, that both betray a great Poverty of Imagination by an insipid Repetition of one Thought in different Expressions. To begin then with the celebrated Simile in the *Campaign*, which, for half a Century, has been undistiguishingly admir'd,

" So when an Angel by Divine Command
 " With rising *Tempests* shakes a guilty Land,
 " Such as of late o'er pale BRITANNIA past,
 " Calm and serene he guides the furious Blast,
 " And pleas'd th' ALMIGHTY's Orders to perform,
 " Rides in the *Whirlwind* and directs the Storm."

Now take the second Line of each Couplet, and examine whether the Thought is

D 2 varied.

varied. Is not *shaking a guilty Land with a rising Tempest*, and *directing the Storm*, and *guiding the furious Blast*, the same Action? Is not acting by *Divine Command*, in the first Verse, and *performing the Almighty's Orders*, in the fifth, the same Thought likewise? MARCIA's Simile in CATO abounds still more with this tiresome Tautology.

So the pure limpid Stream when foul with Stains
Of rushing Torrents, and descending Rains,
Works itself clear, and as it runs refines."

CATO, ACT I.

Rushing Torrents, and *descending Rains*, *works itself clear*, and *as it runs refines*. But now having had the disagreeable Office of denying, for the sake of Truth, this excellent Man a Right to a Pretension of being a good Poet, Justice will exact, and my own Inclination lead me to take notice, that his Translations of OVID are as faithful and spirited, and at the same time carrying as much the free unfetter'd Air of Originals, as any other Translations in the English Language. As I have particulariz'd

ticulariz'd his Defects as a Poet, give me leave to take the more pleasurable Part now to point out Instances of his Capacity as a Translator, which I will select from the Stories of NARCISSUS and ECHO, in the third Book; and of SALMACIS and HERMAPHRODITUS, in the fourth Book of the METAMORPHOSIS. The following Description receives the same additional Beauty from the Translation, as the Youth's Image did from the surrounding Waters.

" Now all undrest upon the Banks he stood,
 " And clapt his Sides, and leapt into the Flood :
 " His lovely Limbs the Silver Waves divide,
 " His Limbs appear more lovely thro' the Tide,
 " As Lillies shut within a crystal Case,
 " Receive a glossy Lustre from the Glafs." †

SALM. & HERM. Book iv.

The following Passages likewise among many others receive the same Advantage.

" The Boy knew nought of Love, and touch'd with Shame
 " He strove and blush'd, but still the Blush became ;

D 3

" In

† Ille, cavis velox applauso corpore palmis,
 Desilit in larices : alternaque brachia ducens
 In liquidis transluet aquis : ut eburnea si quis
 Signa tegat claro, vel candida lilia vitro.

METAM. Lib. iv.

" In rising Blushes still fresh Beauties rose;
 " The sunny Side of Fruit such Blushes shews,
 " And such the Moon, when all her Silver White
 " Turns in Eclipses to a ruddy Light. †

Ibid.

" With eager Steps the Lycian Fields he crost,
 " And Fields that border on the Lycian Coast;
 " A River here he view'd so lovely bright,
 " It shew'd the Bottom in a fairer light,
 " Nor kept a Sand conceal'd from human Sight;
 " The Stream produc'd nor slimy Ooze nor Weeds,
 " Nor miry Rushes, nor the spiky Reeds,
 " But dealt enriching Moisture all around,
 " The fruitful Banks with chearful Verdure crown'd,
 " And kept the Spring eternal on the Ground.*

Ibid.

" But oft would bathe her in the crystal tide,
 " Oft with a Comb her dewy Locks divide;

" Now

† ————— Pueri rubor ora notavit
 Nescia quid sit amor: sed et erubuisse decebat.
 Hic color aprica pendentibus arbore pomis,
 Aut ebori tincto est, aut sub candore rubenti,
 Cum frustra resonant æra auxiliaria Lunæ.

Ibid.

* Ille etiam Lycias urbes, Lyciæque propinquos
 Caras adest. Vidit hic stagnum lucentis ad imum
 Usque solum lymphæ. Non illic Canna palustris,
 Nec steriles ulvæ, nec acuta cuspside junci.
 Perspicuus liquor est. Stagni tamen ultima vivo
 Cespite cinguntur, semperque virgentibus herbis,

Ibid.

“ Now in the limpid Streams she viewed her Face,
 “ And dress her Image in the floating Glass;
 “ On Beds of Leaves she now repos’d her Limbs,
 “ Now gather’d Flowers that grew about her Streams;
 “ And then by Chance was gath’ring, as she stood
 “ To view the Boy, and long’d for what she view’d. †
 Ibid.

Give me leave to transcribe two Passages from the Story of NARCISSUS, and I will refer you to the Whole for a more entire Satisfaction.

“ But why should I complain, I’m sure he burns
 “ With equal Flames, and languishes by turns.
 “ Whene’er I stoop, he offers at a Kiss,
 “ And when my Arms I stretch, he stretchèd his.
 “ His Eye with pleasure on my Face he keeps,
 “ He smiles my Smiles, and when I weep he weeps.
 “ Whene’er I speak, his moving Lips appear
 “ To utter something which I cannot hear. †

Story of Narcis. Book iii.

† Sed modo fonte suo formosos perluit artus:
 Sæpe Citoriaco deducit pectine crines;
 Et quid se deceat spectatas consulit undas.
 Nunc perlucenti circumdata corpus amictu,
 Mollibus aut foliis, aut mollibus incubat herbis.
 Sæpe legit flore. Et tunc quoque forte legebat,
 Cum puerum vidit: visumque optavit habere.

Ibid.

‡ Spem mihi nescio quam vultu promittis amico:
 Cumque ego porrexì tibi brachia, porrigis ultro:

" And none of those attractive Charms remain,
 " To which the slighted Echo su'd in vain.
 " She saw him in his present misery,
 " Whom spight of all her Wrongs she griev'd to see.
 " She answer'd sadly to the Lover's Moan,
 " Sigh'd back his Sighs, and answer'd Groan for Groan.
 " Ah Youth! belov'd in vain, NARCISsus cries,
 " Ah Youth! belov'd in vain, the Nymph replies.
 " Farewell, says he, the parting Sound scarce fell
 " From his faint Lips, but she reply'd, " Farewell.
 " Then on th' unwholsome Earth he gasping lies,
 " Till Death shuts up those self-admiring Eyes,
 " To the cold Shades his flitting Ghost retires,
 " And in the Stygian Waves itself admires.*

Ibid. iii.

If

Cum risi, arrides : lachrymas quoque sæpe notavi
 Me lachrymante tuas : nutu quoque signa remittis :
 Et, quantum motu formosi suspicor oris,
 Verba refers aures non pervenientia nostras.

Metam. Lib. iii.

* Nec corpus remanet quondam quod amaverat Echo,
 Quæ tamen ut vidit, quamvis irata memorque,
 Indoluit : quotiesque puer miserabilis, Eheu,
 Dixerat : hæc resonis iterabat vocibus Eheu.
 Ultima vox solitam fuit hæc spectantis in undam,
 Heu frustra dilecte puer ! totidemque remisit
 Verba locus : dictoque vale, vale inquit et Echo.
 Ille caput viridi sessum submitit in herba.
 Lumina nox claudit domini mirantia formam.

Ibid.

L E T T E R VI. 41

If the ingenious Author of the *Discourse on Poetical Imitation*, had not made it plainly appear, that what is too frequently mistaken for one Poet's Imitation of another, is only an unavoidable Similarity, that will always attend the Description of the same thing drawn by two Geniuses tho' living in two different Ages and Countries (for Descriptions are nothing but Transcripts from Nature, and Nature is always the same) I should have been ready to have pronounced EVE's Description of viewing herself in the Fountain, in *Paradise Lost*, to be borrowed by MILTON from the former of these two last Passages in OVID, which is exactly the same, and then concludes,

————— Pleas'd I soon return'd,
 " Pleas'd it return'd as soon, with answering Looks
 " Of Sympathy and Love: there I had fix'd
 " Mine Eyes till now, and *pin'd with VAIN Desire*,
 " Had not a Voice, &c.

MILTON's Par. Lost. B. iv.

What would lead me too more strongly to the Conjecture, is, the seeming Allusion to the Story of *Narcissus* in the Expression,

pression, *pin'd with VAIN Desire*.—For
fear a Chain of Thoughts should here
lead me to say any thing disrespectful of
that most tasteful work of Nature, Wo-
man, I will abruptly conclude myself,

Your, &c. &c.



L E T T E R

LETTER VII.

To the Same.

I Remember, EUPHEMIUS, when we were reading over together LUCIAN's Dialogue concerning BEAUTY, you was uncommonly pleas'd with that Author for calling HOMER the most excellent of the Painters †. Which imply'd, by bestowing this Expression upon the Father of the Poets, that Poetry comprehended all the Powers of her Sister Art Painting. But I'm afraid it would be too bold in any Writer to call APELLES, or PROTOGENES, the most excellent of the Poets. For tho' no Painter can arrive at any Perfection without a poetical Genius, yet his Art comprehending only Part of the Powers of Poetry, there would not be sufficient Authority for the mutual Appellation. There are Subjects indeed in common

† ΑΡΙΣΤΟΥ ΤΩΝ ΤΕΧΝΩΝ ΟΜΙΛΕΙΝ.

LUCIAN.

mon to Poets and Painters, but even in those very Subjects (not to mention others which are the Province only of the former) Poetry has several adventitious Aids which maintain her Superiority over the other Art. Many Objects, such as the following Night-Pieces for Example, may be so describ'd even by the greatest Poets, 'tis true, that Painters of equal Genius might produce Pictures, betwixt which and them, the Palm of Glory would hang wav'ring. The first is MILTON's,

" The Moon

" Rising in clouded Majesty, at length
 " Apparent Queen unveil'd her peerless Light,
 " And o'er the Earth her Silver Mantle threw."

MILTON's Par. Lost, B. iv.

The next is HOMER's, which EUSTATHIUS esteem'd the most beautiful Night-Piece in Poetry.

Ως δ' οτ' εὐ γενναῖα, &c. †

Iliad. lib. viii. l. 551.

The

† Mr. Pope's Translation of this Passage is, in my Opinion, superior to the Original, which the ingenious Author of *Sir Tho. Fitzosborne's Letters* has remark'd before me. I must add one Observation, which is, that Mr. POPE has most happily digested a Line of Shakespear's,

" And

The rest are SHAKESPEAR'S.

————— “ Yonder blessed Moon —————
 “ That tips with Silver all those Fruit-tree Tops.
 Romeo and Juliet.

Again,

“ The Moon shines bright: in such a Night as this,
 “ When the sweet Wind did gently kiss the Trees,
 “ And they did make no Noise.
 Merch. of Ven.

Now tho', I confess, *these* beautiful Strokes
 of the three greatest Poets the World ever
 produc'd, *may* be equall'd by Painting,
 yet I will prove that one adventitious
 Circumstance *might* be thrown into such
 a Landscape by Poetry, as the utmost
 glow of Colours could never emulate.
 This too SHAKESPEAR has done by a
 metaphorical

“ And *tips with Silver* all those Fruit-tree Tops,”
 into his Translation in this most masterly Manner,
 “ O'er all the Trees a yellower Verdure shed,
 “ And *tip with Silver* every Mountain's Head.
 To this I would apply, as Mr. H—— does in general, the
 Story of DOMINICHINO's availing himself of AUG. CAR-
 RACCI's Picture.

metaphorical Expression in one single Line,

“ How sweet the Moon-light SLEEPS upon that Bank !”
 Merch. of Ven.

That Verb [SLEEPS], taken from animal Life and transfer'd by the irresistible Magic of Poetry, to the before lifeless Objects of the Creation, animates the whole Scene, and conveys an instantaneous Idea to the Imagination what a solemn Stillness is requir'd, when the *peerless Queen* of Night is, in the full Splendor of her Majesty, thus lull'd to Repose. When I once urg'd this, to an enthusiastical Admirer of the *Lombard* School of Painters, in favour of the Pre-eminence of Poetry over his beloved Art, he ingenuously confess'd it was beyond the Power of the Pencil to convey any Idea adequate to this; and the ingenious Reason he gave, why it was so, gave me no small Satisfaction. Painting, said he, passes gently thro' one of the Senses, namely, that of seeing, to the Imagination, but this adventitious

ventitious Beauty of SHAKESPEAR's seizes
 the Imagination at once, before we can re-
 duce the Image to a sensible Object, which
 every *meer* Picture in Poetry ought for a
 Test of its Truth to be reduc'd to: How-
 ever, added he, since we are upon the
 Subject of Night-Pieces, if you will ha-
 zard the Palm of Superiority upon a Sub-
 ject where both these Arts have every Ad-
 vantage in common; that is, if you will
 collate any Description in Poetry which
 conveys only Objects to the Eyes without
 these additional Charms, I dare venture that
 rural Night Landscape, where you see,
 pointing to a fine Picture, the Power of
 the Moon both upon the Land and Wa-
 ter, against the most labour'd Strokes of
 VIRGIL or MILTON, or the more en-
 chanting Sketches of HOMER or SHAKE-
 SPEAR. I must own nothing could be
 more favourable for me than selecting,
 from his Collection, this very Piece, to
 put in Competition with these Geniuses;
 as it did not necessitate me to seek for a
 Description on any other Subject, SHAKE-

SPEAR

48 L E T T E R V I I .

SPEAR having left us a short one, but at the same time the most elegantly picturesque of any I remember ; which with a kind of anticipated Triumph I repeated.

“ To-morrow Night, when *Phæbe* doth behold

“ Her Silver Visage in the watry Glafs,

“ Decking with liquid Pearl the bladed Grass.

Midsummer Night's Dream.

I could perceive by the Looks of my Friend, when I had repeated the second Line, that he thought his favourite Painter had equall'd SHAKESPEAR in the Representation of the Reflection of the Moon in the Water, but, when I had compleated the Scene by the third Line,

“ Decking with liquid Pearl the bladed Grass,”
both his Heart, Eyes, and Tongue confess'd the Victory of our inimitable Poet.

—You know, EUPHEMIUS, the Representations of Nature in her *simple Retirements*, as I us'd to call a rural Evening, were my favourite Subjects; more especially when the Artist had blended with the Truth of Imitation, that undefineable Delicacy of Taste, to which even TRUTH herself

herself is often indebted for a more agreeable Admittance into the Heart. I will illustrate what I mean by Example. That succinct Picture of the Setting Sun in the 8th Book of the *Iliad*,

Εν δ' ἔπες' ὠκεανῷ λαμπρὴν φάος ἡλιοιο
ἔλκον νυκτὶ μελαιναῖ ἐπὶ ζεφύρῳ ἀνέχον.

Lin. 485.

“ Now deep in Ocean sunk the Lamp of Light,
“ Drawing behind the cloudy Veil of Night.”

Pope's Translation.

has very strong Outlines, and commands the warmest Approbation of our *Judgment*, but being unadorn'd with other Circumstances, and wanting Objects to enliven the Landscape, the Applause ends with the Judgment, and never sinks deep into the Heart. Whereas the following Scene, in Mr. COLLINS's Ode to the Evening, being animated by proper Allegorical Personages, and colour'd highly with incidental Expression, warms the Breast with a sympathetic Glow of retir'd Thoughtfulness.

E

“ For

" For when thy folding Star arising shews
 " His paly Circlet, at his warning Lamp,
 " The fragrant Hours and Elves,
 " Who slept in Flow'rs the Day,
 " And many a Nymph who wreaths her Brows with Sedge,
 " And sheds the fresh'ning Dew, and lovelier still,
 " The PENSIVE PLEASURES sweet
 " Prepare thy shadowy Car." †

Perhaps you'll here turn a former Remark
 of my own upon me, and say with the
 tragic Poet,

" It bears a just Resemblance of thy Fortune,
 " And suits the quiet Purpose of thy Soul."

Young's Revenge.

and tell me, as you once did upon a similar
 Occasion, that I'm oblig'd to Retirement
 for the Discovery of these humble
 Pleasures. Perhaps I am in some measure:
 but tho' Sorrows have better'd my Heart
 and render'd it more familiar with Nature

† See a Collection of Odes publish'd a few Years ago
 by Mr. *William Collins*, whose neglected Genius will
 hereafter be both an Honour and a Disgrace to our
 Nation.

ture than it might have been in the cheer-
fuller Scenes of Life, yet you must con-
fess, that, from our earliest Acquaintance,
you always perceiv'd in me a *kindred* Spi-
rit to the PENSIVE PLEASURES. Adieu,
my dear Friend, and rest assur'd, that,
whether I speculate only in the Shades of
Obscurity, or the fullfilling of my not ill-
grounded future Expectations, casts me
into the more noisy Scenes of Action, I
shall always remain with the greatest
Sincerity,

Your, &c. &c.

L E T T E R VIII.

To the Same.

DID AMELIA and several others of my Friends in Reality desire, in Conjunction with you, that I would send you the little Essay, which I wrote several Years ago when I was very young, upon the *polite Arts*; or was it one of the good-natur'd Frauds of Friendship, to deceive me into the harmless Pleasure of thinking such a Trifle should be in request among those, whose Esteem I so highly value? Be it which it will, your Desire shall command my Compliance in every respect, and I will therefore transcribe the whole from the periodical Miscellaneous Collection in which it was publish'd.

§ Nothing is a greater Indication of Luxury, the Fore-runner of Poverty, than the

§ This little Essay was published in a periodical Paper which came out once a Fortnight in the Year 1746.

the Degeneracy of the polite Arts into useless Ostentation. The Poets, Painters, and Sculptors have of late almost forgot what gave rise to, and ought to be the end of their Labours. Those noble Designs in which ATHENS gloried more than in all her Military Exploits, are now little regarded; and those noble Servants of Virtue, the ARTS, which formerly gave Instruction not only to the young and unexperienc'd, but to the old and learned, are mostly slighted, and often prostituted to adorn Vice, and flatter human Vanity. But to lay aside the Severity of the Moralist, and talk to the Professors, of what, they will think, concerns 'em most. I am fully convinc'd that nothing would so much contribute to their Fame and Fortune, and to make 'em complete Masters, as an Attachment to Virtue, and the Uses of Life; and forming their Designs from the Models of those ancient Artists, whose Works have been deliver'd down to us with the greatest Applause, and will be to

all Posterity, as long as Truth is esteem'd the Criterion of Perfection.

Suppose any one of the Geniuses of the present Age, whether Poet, Painter, or Statuary, instead of following the wild Lure of his own Imagination, or the Whims of modern Originals, should modestly content himself to make PRODICUS's Judgment of HERCULES in XENOPHON's *Memorabilia*; the *perfect Beauty* of LUCIAN; or *the mythological Picture of Human Life* written by CEBES, the Subject of his Imitation; I dare answer for it he would presently excell his Brethren, and verify this Observation, that the most faithful Disciples of Nature are always the greatest Masters of Art. This Justice however I must do my Countrymen, to observe, that there are still several among us, who, in spite of publick Depravity, retain a virtuous Love for the Arts, and make *Use* the end of their Endeavours. A Friend of mine, who is an Admirer of the three Pieces above-mention'd, took me to see a Collection of Pictures, which were most of 'em taken
from

from the Designs of those celebrated Writers. Among the rest I was particularly pleas'd with four, which exceeded any modern Performances, I ever saw, in Contrivance and Execution. The Subjects were INFANCY, YOUTH, MANHOOD, and AGE, which were represented in the following manner. The principal Figure of the first Piece was a naked Child coming into a Wilderness, supported by INNOCENCE and WONDER. At the Entrance the FANCIES of various kinds stood ready to receive it, who were conducted, for the most part, by *Imposture*, *Ignorance*, and *Error*; some few indeed by *Reason* and *Truth*. Those, belonging to the former, were the Ministers of *Misery*; those, to the latter, of *Happiness*. Both Parties seem'd very desirous to allure the *new Comer* to their respective Dwellings, and Doubt and Pleasure were blended together in the Infant's Countenance.—The second Piece was compos'd of a Group not unlike the first. A young Man was

repre:

represented walking in a beautiful Garden, where all the Trees in full Blossom were arrang'd in the most natural Manner; the *Loves*, the *Graces*, and *Pleasures* were courting his Embrace, whose Careffes he return'd with mutual Ardor. Beneath the Feet of these was a Serpent crawling out from under a Border of Flowers; and, at a little Distance from thence, three or four *Cupids* binding *Reason* in Chains. VENUS appear'd above, descending in a Chariot drawn by Doves, with her *Idalian* Son upon her Lap, and *Indolence* amidst her Court of infant Vices lolling on a Couch below. — MANHOOD, the Subject of the third Piece, was characteriz'd by a sedate Person in a Vineyard at the time of Vintage. He was leaning in a thoughtful Posture, against a large Olive-Tree, whose Fruit was falling round him. *Ambition* stood on one Side pointing to the Temple of *Glory*, and *Care* on the other Side, with a wrinkled Forehead, looking at *Necessity*. To these the *Arts*
and

and *Sciences* were offering their Assistance, and the *Laws* protecting them, with their written Tables in one hand, and the Sword of *Justice* in the other. But amidst all this Group, the Figures that look'd the most amiable were *Friendship*, conjugal *Love*, and parental *Affection*. To give these the most heavenly Sweetness, the Painter had exerted his utmost Skill; and to these the principal Image seem'd most attentive, as if he regarded the rest only as subservient to them. — The fourth Piece remains to be describ'd. There was an old Man standing in a leafless Grove with his unactive Arms folded together, as if he was fixed in the deepest Meditation. His Beard was long and white, and his Garments like those worn by the *Athenian* Sages. *Reflection* and *Experience* came behind him, and their Offspring *Forefight* and *Precaution* went before. *Reason*, the great Queen of the intellectual Train, appeared in a triumphal Car, with the *Passions* chain'd to the Wheels, and *Opinion* waiting on her Look:

at

at some Distance *Hope* and *Peace* were ready to conduct the Sage to the Temple of *Death*, who sat upon a Throne with *Time*, (his Train of *Hours* and *Days* attending round), and seem'd to invite the approaching Guest with a friendly Smile of Salutation, and not to deter him with the Looks of Horror, in which the Guilty are accusom'd to paint him. — In these four Pictures, the Seasons of Life, the *Passions*, &c. are most beautifully performed, and may serve as a Specimen of what was esteem'd ingenious and beautiful among the Ancients.

But besides these, I was not a little delighted with another single Piece in the same Collection. It was the Wreck of a large Ship on a Rock; the Vessel is suppos'd to have just bulg'd, the Mariners are all in the utmost Confusion and Despair, and in the midst of 'em upon the Deck stands a beautiful young Woman looking down upon the Waves below, where an old Man is expiring with a dead Infant in his Arms: the one is supposed

to be her Father, the other her Child: the lively Anguish, mix'd with the most tender Looks of parental and filial Love, which she expresses, never fails to raise in the Spectator of this master-piece of Art, the most heart-ennobling Pity, and gives us a silent Lesson of Duty and Affection.—Such Subjects as these ought to employ the Time of every Artist, where natural and moral Beauty would be again united as they were of old; for whenever a good Taste prevails in the one, an inseparable Connection will transfer it into the other; but as long as *Superstition* uses *Art* like a Magician's Wand, to delude the Multitude with her fairy Creations, and *Luxury* allures her to rebel against *Virtue*, the Productions must necessarily be monstrous; disgust every undistempered Mind; and only suit that Incongruity from whence they sprung of *Priestcraft* and *Licentiousness*.

You see, EUPHEMIUS, how willing I am to oblige you, by hazarding to your nice Inspection the first Sallies of a young,
tho'

60 L E T T E R V I I I .

tho' well-meaning, Fancy. If the Essay gives AMELIA any Pleasure, I dare say you'll very soon communicate it to me, as I am convinc'd, from repeated Favours of this kind, that you will never let any Opportunity escape of giving me even the least Satisfaction; much less will you conceal from me what, you may very well know, will afford the greatest. I am,

Your, &c. &c.



L E T T E R

L E T T E R IX.

To the Same.

I Am quite sick, my dear Friend, of the splendid Impertinence, the unmeaning Glitter, the tasteless Profusion, and monstrous Enormities, which I have lately seen in a Summer's Ramble to some of the Villas which swarm in the Neighbourhood of our Metropolis. You would imagine that the Owners, having retain'd the horrid Chimæras of a fev'rish Dream, had jumbled 'em together in a waking Frenzy. In one Place was a House built from an aukward Delineation plunder'd from an old *Indian* Screen, and decorated with all the Monsters of *Asia* and *Africa*, inhospitably grinning at Strangers over every Door, Window, and Chimney-Piece. In another, we found an old *Gothic* Building encrusted with Stucco, sliced into *Grecian* Pilasters, with gilded Capitals; superbly lined with Paper disfigur'd all over with the fat Deities of *CHINA*,
and

and the heterogeneous Animals that exist only in the aërial Regions of UTOPIA. Few, very few, did we meet with that bore any relation to Proportion, or the Conveniencies and natural Emoluments of Life. But in all these notable Distortions of Art, I perceiv'd the poor prostituted Word TASTE, was constantly made use of to express the abortive Conceptions of a distemper'd *Fancy*. From a cursory View of these motley Productions of modern Refinement, you would be led to think, that the new Gentry of the City, and their Leaders the well-dress'd Mob about St. *James's*, were seiz'd, the very Moment they left the Town-Air, with a *Chinese* Madness, and imagined a Deviation from *Truth* and *Nature* was an infallible Criterion of TASTE. But of all the splendid Impertinencies I ever saw, nothing ever excited in me so contemptuous an Indignation as MUCIO's Palace; and yet the silly Multitude pour forth in abundant Crowds from the adjacent City, during

during the Summer Season, on a particular Day of the Week, which the indulgent Owner sets apart for that Purpose, to gaze with open-mouth'd Astonishment at the superb Nothing of this unmeaning Structure. MUCIO's Palace stands about six Miles from LONDON, upon a dry barren Spot where God never intended Wood should naturally grow or Water spring: MUCIO therefore made choice of this Spot, in preference to any other, to shew the *admiring* Spectators, that Wealth could perform every thing in the Physical World, as his *wary* Ancestors had found it would do in the Moral. So to supply what Nature in a profuse Irregularity bestows upon other Places, but had withheld from this, he planted, at an immense Expence, by Rule and Line, several *pretty* Walks of Elm Trees, so engagingly like one another, that, at the first Glance, you may know them all to be of the same Family; and observing that Water is more *naturally* collected into, and preserv'd in
a Body,

a Body, in low Situations, Mucio, whose chief Aim, it seems, was to *excel Nature*, most *artfully* catch'd upon an Eminence, in a round Bason turn'd by a pair of Compasses, or more properly a large Rain-water Cistern of ten Acres, the imprison'd Contributions of Winter Showers, to putrify by Stagnation in the Summer Season. The House itself, 'tis true, is built with good *Portland* Stone, before which is *stuck on* a Portico in the *Corinthian* Order. The Rooms within are large without Magnificence; numerous without Convenience; and fitted up with an ostentatious Splendor, without the minutest Appearance of any one real Elegance. The Furniture is even disgustingly expensive, and ornamented into useless Incumbrance. Several daub'd Copies of P. PININI's Ruins dangle over monstrous Marble Chimney-Pieces, that look like Family Monuments in a Cathedral; and not a few shapeless naked *Pagan* Deities, *done* by modern Artists, sprawl upon Canvass surrounded with

with gilt Frames, tack'd upon Hangings of Gold and Silver Tissue. In short, the whole seems as if MUCIO had been suffer'd by Heaven, to squander away immense Treasures in this most ridiculous manner, to give a silent Lesson of Consolation to every Spectator, how low soever his Lot is fallen in the vale of Life, that Nature and Propriety will make a thatch-covered Cottage useful, and an Ornament in the rural Landscape round him, when this enormous Pile of Stones scarce afforded the tasteless Builder a dwelling Room, and will remain, even in Ruins, a Monument of Vanity and Dulness.—I am glad you have finished, to your Satisfaction, the *Palladian* Bridge, you was so busy about when I was last with you at ———. I have selected a very beautiful parcel of Spar for your Grotto, which I propose to send in a few Days. I am,

Your, &c. &c.

F

LETTER

L E T T E R X.

TO EUGENIO.

I Have sent you according to my Promise, EUGENIO, that little Philosophical Poem, I have so often recommended, written by Sir JOHN DAVIES, entitled, *The Original, Nature, and Immortality of the Soul*. Wherein you will find the secret Springs of Pleasure and Pain, Love and Hatred, laid open to your Inspection. The ingenious Author, after having described the *five Senses* as the Inlets of all Objects to the Soul, and the Imagination as a *Sense in common* betwixt them and the *intellectual Powers*, proceeds to explain in the following Stanzas whence the *Spirits* of *Sense* [i. e. TASTE] arise, and how they influence the human Passions.

“ But since the *Brain* does lodge the Pow’rs of Sense,
 “ How comes it in the *Heart* those Passions spring?
 “ The mutual Love the kind Intelligence;
 “ ’Twixt *Heart* and *Brain* this Sympathy doth bring.
 “ From

- " From the kind Heat which in the Heart doth reign,
- " The *Spirits of Life* doth their beginning take,
- " Those *Spirits of Life* ascending to the Brain
- " When they come there the *Spirits of Sense* do make;
- " These *Spirits of Sense* in *Fantasy*'s high Court,
- " Judge of the Forms of Objects ill or well,
- " And so they send a good or ill Report
- " Down to the Heart where all *Affections* dwell.
- " If the Report be *good* it causeth *Love*,
- " And longing *Hope*, and well-assured *Joy*,
- " If it be ill, then doth it Hatred move,
- " And trembling *Fear*, and vexing *Griefs* annoy.

You will observe from hence that a true relish for Life as well as for natural Beauty, depends upon a right Management of our Fancies; for if Fancy presents Objects in false Appearances to these *Spirits of Sense*, the *Affections* will embrace Vice and Deformity with the Caresses, which naturally belong to Virtue and Beauty. For this Reason the noble Author of the CHARACTERISTICS warns us, out of the Stoic School, against the Delusions of a false Fancy, as the most important Con-

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cern of our Being †. If you would see this Doctrine illustrated and adorned with the most genuine Flowers of Poetry, let me recommend you to the third Book of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, the most beautiful of all didactic Poems.—I find Ambition has drawn you, from the quiet Retirement I last left you in, to the busy buzz of Courts and Levees. I must ingenuously confess that the pursuit of Wealth and Honours I should *now* enjoy myself, for since the irreparable Loss of all domestic Comforts I sustained by the death of my dear EUDOCIA, I have plac'd my chief Happiness in hopes of raising myself to the Character a long race of Ancestors have possessed before me; but for you, who still enjoy the more desirable Comforts of conjugal Love, to leave the enchanting Conversation of your fair accomplish'd Friend, for the dull jargon of Business, is an exchange infinitely to your Loss. If *Fancy* has dress'd up *domestic*
HAPPINESS

† See Lord Shaftesbury's *Characteristics* passim.

HAPPINESS in the Robes of Office, believe me she plays the *Spirits of Sense* very false, and let me warn you betimes, lest your Fate should be the same as that of a noble *Arabian* I have heard related. The Story is this. There dwelt at IZRA a young Nobleman named MIRAVAN, who was blessed with Health, Wit, Beauty, and a sufficient Competency of the good Things of this World, which for some Years he enjoy'd with the most uninterrupted Satisfaction, till one Day walking among the Tombs of his Ancestors, he observ'd upon one of them the following Inscription almost erased by Time ;

IN THIS TOMB IS A GREATER TREASURE
THAN CROESUS EVER POSSESSED.

Inflamed immediately with the very lust of Avarice, he caused the *pond'rous and marble Jaws* (as *Shakespeare* calls them) of his Ancestor's Sepulchre to be opened ; when entering with rapt'rous Expectation of finding immense Treasures, he was struck

F 3 speechless

speechless with Disappointment to behold nothing but a heap of Bones, Dust, and Putrefaction, with this Inscription over it.

HERE WOULD HAVE DWELT ETERNAL REPOSE A TREASURE CROESUS NEVER POSSESSED WHICH THOU HAST DRIVEN HENCE BEING EXCITED BY AN INSATIABLE LOVE OF GOLD TO DISTURB THE SACRED REMAINS OF THY PROGENITORS. HAD NOT THY REASON BEEN DELUDED BY A FALSE FANCY SHE WOULD HAVE TOLD THEE THAT THE GRAVE CONTAINS NOTHING BUT DUST AND ASHES.

Adieu, my dear EUGENIO, and build no Expectations but upon the Rock of Probability. I am,

Your, &c.



LETTER

LETTER XI.

TO EUPHEMIUS.

I Am greatly pleased, EUPHEMIUS, that you was of the same Opinion as myself, in a late Conversation, that nothing would vitiate a Man's *Taste* for Poetry more, than frequently reading the *Italian* Poets. Their forc'd Allusions, their tinsel *Concetti*, and perpetual Affectation of hunting for *pretty* Thoughts indiscriminately upon every Subject, are so many Deviations from good Writing, which degrade the Dignity of *Heroic*, and totally destroy the simplicity of *Pastoral* Poesy. Sir PHILIP SIDNEY'S ARCADIA affords a sufficient Example how much the finest Genius may be corrupted by a too familiar Intercourse with those exotic Triflers. I don't mean by this to extend my Censure to every Part of their poetical Compositions, as there are many

beautiful Passages in TASSO's JERUSALEM in one Species, and in his AMINTA in the other; in ARIOSTO's ORLANDO, and in GUARINI's PASTOR FIDO, which are worthy of the highest Commendations; much less would I recommend the *total* neglect of them, or snatch that palm of Glory from their Heads, which they have justly merited, from being the Inventors of the *Dramatic Pastoral*. Nevertheless I still retain the Sentiments, I then advanced, that there were even in those two celebrated Pieces the AMINTA, and PASTOR FIDO, such a tasteless Profusion of that shining Stuff, which BOILEAU calls *Clinquant*, as must greatly disgust every Reader whose Fancy is properly chastened by that Parent of sober Criticism, from whom the STAGYRITE drew every Precept, *unerring Nature*. The first Act of both is full of those *pretty* Absurdities; and indeed GUARINI so faithfully copies his Predecessor, that LINCO utters DAFNE's Thoughts

Thoughts throughout, and almost too in the same Expressions. For Example,

✓ Odi quel Ufcignuolo
Che va di ramo in ramo
Cantando, *Io amo, Io amo.*

Dafn. in Am. Act 1.

Quell' Augellin, che canta
Si dolcemente, e lascivetto vola
Or da l' Abete al Faggio,
Ed or dal Faggio al Mirto,
S' avesse umano Spirto,
Direbbe, ardo d'amore, ardo d'amore.'

Linco in Pastor Fido, Act 1.

La Biscia lascia il suo veleno, e corre
Cupida al suo Amatore:
Van le Tigri in amore:
Ama il Leon superbo:

Dafne in Aminta, Act 1.

This last description of Tasso's, of the force of Love in the Brute Creation, is indeed unaffectedly beautiful, but GUARINI, thinking

thinking it a plain and spiritless Observation, has *Italianiz'd* it to his own Fancy in the following manner.

Mugge in mandra l'armento, et quei muggiti
Sono amorosi inviti.

Rugge il Leone al bosco,

Ne quel ruggito è d'ira,

Così d'amor sospira.

Paster Fido, Act 1.

This Lion (as THESEUS says of his Brother in SHAKESPEAR'S *Midsummer Night's Dream*) is a very gentle Beast, and of a good Conscience. But I cannot dismiss this Passage without noticing the Merit of the AMSTERDAM Editor of 1732, who founds this ingenious explanatory Note upon the poor Word *Così*. *nell istesso modo* (says he) o forse meglio: *quando fa Così*, cio è quando rugge. It may easily be conceiv'd how a luxuriant Fancy may in the heat of poetic Rapture glow up into Nonsense; but how a Commentator can coolly explain it afterwards is beyond my Understanding to account for.

I should

I should be glad if some of those Gentlemen, who are so *willing to believe* the Superiority of the *Italian* Poets over their own Countrymen, would collate FLETCHER'S *Faithful Shepherdes*, and MILTON'S *Comus*, with the abovementioned Pieces, and impartially consider the full Merit of both. I dare say they would find this Branch of Laurel, which those two great Men have so successfully transplanted from ITALY, flourishes better in our own temperate Climate, than on the Banks of the TIBER. But, as the FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS is more precisely a dramatic pastoral Poem than COMUS, and the first too that was attempted in our Language, I would rest the Contention upon that alone. If they descend to particular Passages, the following may safely be put in Competition both for Taste and Moral, with any they can produce from their favourite Authors. After the *Satyr* has left CLORIN, the Faithful Shepherdes,

defs, she breaks out into the following Soliloquy.

- “ All my Fears go with thee.
 “ What Greatness, or what private hidden Power
 “ Is there in me, to draw Submission
 “ From this rude Man or Beast? Sure I am mortal:
 “ The Daughter of a Shepherd, he was mortal:
 “ And she that bore me mortal: prick my Hand
 “ And it will bleed; a Fever shakes me, and
 “ The self-same wind that makes the young Lambs shrink
 “ Makes me a-cold: my Fear says I am mortal:
 “ Yet I have heard, my Mother told it me,
 “ And now I do believe it, if I keep
 “ My Virgin Flow’r uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair,
 “ No Goblin, Wood-God, Fairy, Elf, or Fiend,
 “ Satyr, or other Pow’r that haunts the Grove,
 “ Shall hurt my Body, or by vain Illusion,
 “ Draw me to wander after idle Fires;
 “ Or Voices calling me in dead of Night,
 “ To make me follow, and to tole me on
 “ Thro’ Mire and standing Pool, to find my Ruin:
 “ Else why should this rough thing who never knew
 “ Manners nor smooth Humanity, whose heats
 “ Are rougher than himself, and more mishapent
 “ Thus mildly kneel to me? Sure there’s a Pow’r
 “ In that great name of Virgin, that binds fast
 “ All rude uncivil Bloods, all Appetites
 “ That break their Confines. Act 1.

PERIGOT’S Declaration, of the Purity of
 his Love to AMORET, and the Chastity
 of his Intentions, is not less tastefully
 described

described in the same Act, not forgetting how ingeniously the Poet has avail'd himself of the Prejudices imbib'd in Infancy concerning invifible Powers.

“ O do not wrong my honeft fimple Truth,
 “ Myfelf and my Affections are as pure
 “ As thofe chafte Flames that burn before the Shrine
 “ Of the chafte DIAN: Only my Intent
 “ To draw you thither was to plight our Troths
 “ With interchange of mutual chafte Embraces,
 “ And ceremonious tying of our Souls:
 “ For to that holy Wood is confecrate
 “ A virtuous Well, about whose flow'ry Banks
 “ The nimble-footed Fairies dance their Rounds
 “ By the pale Moon-shine, dipping often times
 “ Their ftolen Children, fo to make 'em free
 “ From dying Flefh, and dull Mortality;
 “ By this fair Fount hath many a Shepherd fworn,
 “ And given away his Freedom, many a Troth
 “ Been plight, which neither Envy, nor old Time
 “ Could ever break, with many a chafte Kifs given
 “ In hope of coming Happinefs. Act 1.

Nor is AMARILLIS's Description of the *fullen Shepherd*, his Dog, and his Flocks, lefs tafteful. When I here fay *tafteful*, I would not be underftood to mean that the Objects describ'd are fo, I mean the Description

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Description only; for Poetry, as well as Painting, being an imitative Art, a Poet may shew as much Ingenuity and Taste in the Description of a Desert, as in that of the most flowery Landscape.

“ There is a Shepherd dwells
 “ Down by the Moor, whose Life hath ever shewn
 “ More fullen Discontent than SATURN’S Brow,
 “ When he sits frowning on the Births of Men:
 “ One that doth wear himself away in Loneliness,
 “ And never joys, unless it be in breaking
 “ The holy plighted Troths of mutual Souls:
 “ One that lusts after every several Beauty,
 “ But yet was never known to love or like
 “ Were the Face fairer and more full of Truth
 “ Than PHOEBE in her Fullness, or the Youth
 “ Of smooth LYÆUS; whose nigh-starved Flocks
 “ Are always scabby, and infect all Sheep
 “ They feed withal, whose Lambs are ever last
 “ And die before their weaning, and whose Dog
 “ Looks like his Master, lean, and full of Scurf,
 “ Not caring for the Pipe or Whistle.

Act I.

To dwell upon every Beauty in this Piece, would be to transcribe the whole. I shall therefore only add, that all Men of Genius, since the Death of the great Author, have

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have concurr'd in applauding this most excellent Performance. As I have so warmly spoken of this Play, give me Leave to recommend to you the additional Pleasure, when you next read it, of perusing the Notes of the last Editor Mr. SEWARD, who has made some happy E-mendations in the Text, and very appositely illustrated his Author with several similar Passages from HOMER, THEOCRITUS, VIRGIL, SPENSER, SHAKESPEAR and MILTON.—Notwithstanding what I have said concerning the *Italians*, I hope my Compliments won't be unacceptable to our ingenious Friend, whom we call PETRARCH, in his Retirement in the Vale of —, known among us by the Name of VALCLUSA, and his amiable, I may say, his enchanting LAURA. Adieu.

I am,

Your, &c. &c.

L E T T E R XII.

T O P H I L E M O N.

I Have been several Days, my dear PHILEMON, feeding my Eyes with those delicious Remains of ancient Architecture, the Ruins of PALMYRA, with which those very ingenious Gentlemen Mr. DAWKINS and Mr. WOOD, who made a Voyage into ASIA on Purpose with the much to be lamented Mr. BOUVERIE, have so greatly entertain'd the Public. What a Blessing it is to Mankind in general, and Glory to the Country in particular they belong to, when ample Fortunes fall to the Lot of Men of such tasteful and benevolent Dispositions! I am almost persuaded that LONGINUS himself must have been the Architect of the Temple of the Sun. There is something so sublime in that View of the grand Entrance, and the noble Perspective behind it; and so analogous to his capacious Conceptions of Great-

Greatness in poetical Compositions ; that many a one, with a Fancy less warm than mine, join'd to a Temper somewhat more dogmatical, would pronounce it absolutely to be the Work of that great Genius, and endeavour to support his Opinion, like a modern Controversialist, with a hundred notable Conjectures tack'd together with Shreads of ancient History. I must own I was greatly surpriz'd that among this prodigious Heap of magnificent Ruins, there should be found only four IONIC Pillars, and all the rest should be of the CORINTHIAN Order. The Detestation the PALMYRENES bore to the ROMANS might be a strong Reason there should be none of the TUSCAN ; but why one GRECIAN Order should be so little us'd, and the other totally neglected, seems not so easily to be accounted for, especially too when the IONIC was more in use, thro' ASIA *Minor* and the neighbouring Countries to PALMYRA, than both the other two join'd together. 'Tis true indeed, the Simplicity of the

G

DORIC

DORIC would have ill suited the magnificent Structures built in Honor of the greater Cœlestial Gods, but might nevertheless with the utmost Propriety and Taste have been applied in Temples of the inferior Deities, and more particularly too of those who presided over the Concerns of the innocent Shepherd and laborious Husbandman. Here not only the plain substantial Column of the DORIC, the Canon of whose Order was ascertain'd, not by the lofty Cedar, but by sturdy Trees of a more common Growth, was the only *proper* Support for the Temple of PAN or SYLVANUS, but the Ornaments generally made use of in that Order were such too as would be expected naturally in Buildings of that kind at the first Institution of this rural Religion; namely, the Heads and Horns of Animals offer'd up in their Sacrifices. The want of this Species of Architecture makes me suspect, that the Ruins which now remain were built at a Time when an unbounded Luxury had over-run the State,

State, and almost extinguish'd the natural Taste for Truth and Propriety. The great Critic just mention'd, has a most beautiful Observation in his *Treatise upon the Sublime*, concerning the Effect which immoderate Wealth has both upon private Families and Nations, and the speedy Progress it makes to obliterate in the human Soul, by the Luxury accompanying it, that noble and natural Regard for every Species of Virtue, which the benevolent Author of our Being has originally implanted in us. " I cannot conceive, " (says LONGINUS) how it can happen " otherwise, but that we, who are so " doatingly fond of immense Riches, or, to " speak more justly, who idolize 'em, " should receive into our Souls those " Evils which are congenial with 'em. " For Profusion very closely follows " Wealth, or, as we may say, accompa- " nies it; and the latter having open'd " the Gates both of Cities and private " Families, they enter in and dwell toge- " ther: where having settled for some

“ time they make their Nest (as the wise
 “ observe) and presently endeavouring to
 “ propagate their Kind, they beget *Pride*
 “ and *Luxury*, which are no spurious Is-
 “ sues, but their true and legitimate Off-
 “ spring. Whoever permit these Children
 “ of Wealth to come to Maturity within
 “ them, they soon bring forth those impla-
 “ cable Tyrants in their Souls, *Contumely*,
 “ *Injustice, and Impudence*” §. Now, History
 will inform us, that in all Empires a simi-
 lar Depravity of Taste for Arts and Sci-
 ences and natural Beauty, has ever attend-
 ed a national Corruption of Morals. In
 the glorious and virtuous Part of the Ro-
 MAN Republic under the Consuls, what
 admirable Edifices were erected for pub-
 lic Use, such as Temples for the Wor-
 ship of the Gods, Senate-Houses, Grana-
 ries and Aquæducts! In the Sink of Vice
 under the Emperors, we hear of expensive
 Mausoleums, immense Circusses, splen-
 did

§ Οὐ δὴ ἐχὼ λογιζόμενος εὐρεῖν ὡς αὖν, &c. Longin.
 de Sublim. Page 248. Edit. Pearce.

did Amphitheatres, stately Columns dedicated to Monsters who disgrac'd their Species, and many other tasteless Wonders built for the Gratification of human Vanity. From hence I am inclinable to think the Ruins now before us were erected in the Age immediately preceding, or in that of ZENOBIA herself; when the splendid CORINTHIAN only could satisfy the Luxury of the Times, which had eradicated that Taste for Propriety as otherwise would have been occasionally delighted with the milder Charms of the DORIC Order. Nevertheless considering a true Taste for Architecture must have preceded this indiscriminate Magnificence, and that many of these Buildings too are not only Instances of great Science, but likewise often applied with great Propriety (for Instance, among others, the great Temple) I could not help falling into the same kind of Reflection as Sulpicius makes, in his Letter to CICERO §, on

G 3

seeing,

§ The humane *Sulpicius* thus apostrophizes himself, after the Reflection. Hem! nos homunculi indignamur.

seeing, in his voyage from ASIA, the Ruins of ÆGINA, MEGARA, the PIRÆEUS, and CORINTH. *Shall such inconsiderable Creatures as myself, (said I) repine at any little private Loss, when at one View I behold the astonishing Magnificence of so many hundred Families, and the vast public Structures of a mighty Kingdom, all in Ruins before me? Indeed, PHILEMON, I begin to be ashamed that you ever heard me murmur!—I am now going with a Party of select Friends of both Sexes to take a Tour of Pleasure to several Seats in the North of —shire. When I return, you may rely upon receiving free and impartial Observations upon what we see there, in the manner you delight in, when you desire me to give you my flow of Soul. Adieu, my dear Friend, and*
 continue

si quis nostrum interiit, aut occisus est, quorum vita brevior esse debet, cum uno loco tot oppidum cadavera projecta jaceant? *Visne tu te, Serui, cohibere, et m. minosse, hominem te esse natum?* Epist. lib. 4. epist. 5.

LETTER XII. 87

continue to do me the Justice of thinking
that my Heart always flows from my
Tongue and Pen, especially when I say
how much I am,

Your, &c. &c.



G4 LETTER

LETTER XIII.

TO LEONORA.

JOY to you, my dear LEONORA, upon the Accomplishment of all your own Wishes, and those of a Man who I believe is as dear to you as yourself; at least of one whose Happiness is necessary to constitute yours. You are now enter'd into that State from whence, as our great Poet says,

“ Relations dear, and all the Charities

“ Of Father, Son, and Brother, first were known. †

Give me leave therefore, as the tie of Blood betwixt us may in some measure authorize the Freedom, and the Friendship we have always had for each other still more, to mix with the unfeign'd Joy of Congratulation, the unrestrainable Tenderness of a Brother, and Concern of a Friend,

† Par. Lost, Book the 4th.

LETTER XIII. 89

Friend, in giving my Advice to you in this Scene of Happiness. Nor think it any Reflection upon the strength of your Understanding, or the goodness of your Heart, that I should imagine I could any way contribute to your Felicity by Admonition, which is not concerning your Prudence, (for, to free you at once from any pain of that sort, I really think it incapable of Improvement) but relating to the Observation of some inferior Excellencies, which with the generality of your Sex have past unregarded, but, give me leave to say, are as essentially necessary to preserve a Husband's *Desires*, as the more respectable Duties of a Wife. 'Tis not enough that a Woman is a faithful domestic Friend, she should daily study to invest herself with a hundred little *tasteful* Graces, suitable to the Disposition of the Man she marries, if she would still retain those unspeakable Charms, conceived only by Lovers, with which she originally captivated his Heart. This grand Secret, my dear Sister, lies in this short Precept,

Never

Never lose the Mistress in the Wife; a Text of Bullion Sense, which an Essay Writer would wire-draw into twenty glittering Pages. But as my Design is, not to gain your Applause of my talent as a Writer, but to give a hint for the Promotion of your Happiness; to say more will be unnecessary, to say less would be unaffectionate. I know some of our Friends would rally me for laying so great a stress upon minute Embellishments of Mind and Body; but I would soon stop the Laughter of those Gain-fayers by the following Fable, the Truth of whose Moral is as old and certain as the Foundation of the World, tho' the Story is my own Invention. PSYCHE, a Virgin born in the Island of CYPRUS, grew enamour'd of CUPID the Son of VENUS. After making some unsuccessful Attempts to inspire the little God with a mutual Passion, she retired from the World to vent her Complaints in melancholy Solitude. There dwelt not far from PAPHOS, the Metropolis of the Country, a Nymph called

TASTE,

L E T T E R XIII. 91

TASTE, a Daughter of one of the GRACES, to whom the VIRTUES, ARTS, SCIENCES, and even the GODDESS of the Island herself often resorted. For without the Assistance of some secret Charms she bestowed upon them, tho' they perhaps might sometimes coldly satisfy the World, their Endeavours to *enchant* it were always effectual. Hither PSYCHE repaired, and having discovered the Cause of her Uneasiness, supplicated the Nymph in the most humble manner to relieve her Distresses. TASTE, who never refus'd to comply with the Petitions of her sincere Votaries, heard the Virgin's Request with Compassion, and having made up a Zone of the same Materials with which she had formerly compos'd the Cestus of VENUS, gave it her with the following Injunctions. " Take, said she, my dear PSYCHE, this " magic Zone, and wear it perpetually " round you, from whose latent Folds " such an unspeakable Power shall be " added to your natural Charms, that the " disdainful God of soft Desires shall not " only

“ only be captivated with your Beauty,
“ as soon as he sees you, but shall be re-
“ tained in a voluntary and pleasurable
“ Bondage as long as you preserve this
“ mysterious Pledge of my Affection.
“ Take the stricted Care therefore of this
“ inestimable Treasure, for should you
“ thro’ Neglect be so unfortunate to lose
“ it, CUPID has Wings and will make
“ use of them to leave you.” Let it be
sufficient to say, that PSYCHE bound the
Zone round her Waist, and accordingly
so far succeeded in her Wishes, that
HYMEN in his Saffron Robe soon pro-
nounced a happy Union betwixt her and
the Son of VENUS. Days, Weeks, and
Months passed on in uninterrupted circles
of still increasing Raptures. If PSYCHE
went into the Meadows and Groves to
taste the Tribute of the returning Spring,
CUPID was ever ready to wanton before
her, and fill her Lap with the choicest
Flowers and Blossoms. If she was in-
clinable in the heat of Summer to visit
the

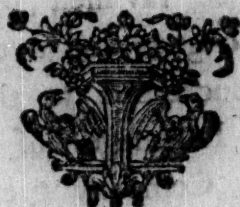
the Rivers and Fountains, his Image was constantly mixed with hers in the floating Mirror. PSYCHE began now to think her Zone useless, and a troublesome Incumbrance; therefore being one Day fatigued with the usual Sports of the Country, she loosened the golden Studs with which it was fastened round her Waist, and threw it disdainfully into the passing River. Very few Days passed after this, before she perceived a visible Alteration in the Affections of her adored CUPID; his Eyes no longer languished on hers with ineffable Desire; his Ears ceased, as they were wont, to be ravished with the Musick of her Tongue; and a civil Indifference soon succeeded to the heretofore glowing Language of Extacy. By degrees her Company grew every Day more and more displeasing to him, till at length a total Disgust having seized his Fancy, he spread his rosy Wings in Air, and for ever left the

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the detested Habitation of his once beloved PSYCHE.

Pray deliver my Congratulations upon this happy Occasion to ARISTUS yourself, and then I am sure they will not fail of being acceptable. I am, dear LEONORA, with the greatest Sincerity,

Your, &c. &c.



L E T T E R

LETTER XIV.

To the Same.

IT gave me uncommon Pleasure that my Fable of Admonition was so well received by you and ARISTUS. Indeed, LEONORA, I can never think my Time better spent, than when I am employed in the promotion of Happiness in a Heart, so capable of every virtuous and elegant Sentiment as your own. I must confess, I had an Intention of sending you an Epithalamium on your Wedding Day, but when I began to express myself with the tenderest Concern; and most ardent Wishes for your Happiness, I found the Muses, who are habituated to Fiction, were so unpropitious to unpoetical Truth, that, at the conclusion of two or three honest Stanzas, I was obliged to drop my Pen, and offer up, in the room of it, a free Libation of the Tears of Joy to the God of Marriage. However, as it was not then in my Power to amuse you with any
Poetry

Poetry of my own Composition, I shall now take the liberty to send you without any Apology an old Song, wrote above a hundred Years ago, upon a similar Occasion, by the happy Bridegroom himself. And tho' this old Song has been so little heard of, and as yet introduced into no modern Collection, I dare venture to pronounce there is in it more genuine Poetry, easy turn of Thought, Elegance of Diction, Delicacy of Sentiment, Tenderness of Heart, and natural Taste for Happiness, than in all the Compositions of this Sort, I ever read, in any Language. But as you and ARISTUS have the same way of thinking as this happy Bard, he'll presently raise by Sympathy an Admirer in each of your Breasts, and it is unnecessary for me to bespeak your Favour any farther.

A SONG

x It is in a Collection published by Lewis 1726
and in Watts' Miscellaneous 1727

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A S O N G.

I.

AWAY, let nought to Love displeasing,
My WINIFREDA, move thy Fear,
Let nought delay the heav'nly Blessing,
Nor squeamish Pride, nor gloomy Care.

II.

What tho' no Grants of Royal Donors
With pompous Titles grace our Blood,
We'll shine in more substantial Honours,
And to be noble we'll be good.

III.

What tho' from Fortune's lavish Bounty
No mighty Treasures we possess,
We'll find within our Pittance Plenty,
And be content without Excess.

IV.

Still shall each kind returning Season,
Sufficient for our Wishes give,
For we will live a Life of Reason,
And that's the only Life to live.

V.

Our Name, whilst Virtue thus we tender,
Shall sweetly sound where e're 'tis spoke,
And all the Great Ones much shall wonder,
How they admire such little Folk.

H

VI. Thro'

VI.

Thro' Youth and Age in Love excelling,
We'll hand in hand together tread,
Sweet smiling Peace shall crown our Dwelling,
And Babes, sweet smiling Babes our Bed.

VII.

How should I love the pretty Creatures,
Whilst round my Knees they fondly clung,
To see 'em look their Mother's Features,
To hear 'em lisp their Mother's Tongue!

VIII.

And when with Envy Time transported
Shall think to rob us of our Joys,
You'll in your Girls again be courted,
And I go wooing in my Boys.

May all the Prophetic Feelings of
future Joys contained in this Song
fall to the Lot of you and yours!
But above all, may sweet smiling Peace
spread her Olive Branches over your
Door, and yourselves those other *Olive*
Branches round your Table!—My
Spirits have been very low of late,
which I attribute to beholding fre-
quently

quently some Objects of Distress about me. If therefore my Malady is owing either to corporeal or mental Sympathy, I don't know where I can find a surer Remedy than under the same Roof with you and ARISTUS. So you may expect a Patient very soon, I am,

Your, &c. &c.



LETTER XV.

TO EUPHEMIUS.

I Have been as often enraged, EUPHEMIUS, as yourself, at the trite, dull, and false Observation, often made by the half-witted Pretenders to Learning, that we have no poetical Genius left among us. How far this *tasteless* Prejudice against our own Times, may tend to extinguish what we have, I know not ; but certain I am, that, if this stupid Reverence for *whatever* was the Productions of our Ancestors, and the more irrational † and indiscrimi-

† This Failing is by no means totally peculiar to our present Age, (tho' perhaps now carried higher than it ever was in any other ;) for HORACE makes the same Complaint of the *Romans* in his Time, in his Epistle to AUGUSTUS. The Poet after having ingeniously to his Patron shewed the Injury and Absurdity of the Practice, cries out,

Indignor quicquam reprehendi, non quia crasse
Compositum, illepideve putetur, sed quia nuper.

If the Reader would see one of the most *tasteful* critical Performances ever published, I refer him to Mr. H——'s Notes and Commentary on this Epistle.

indiscriminate neglect of our Contemporaries prevail, we shall be stigmatised by our more discerning Successors as the leaden Sons of BOEOTIA were of old. For my Part, I am of opinion, that there is now living a Poet of the most genuine Genius this Kingdom ever produced, SHAKESPEAR alone excepted. By poetical Genius, I don't mean the meer talent of *making Verses*, but that glorious Enthusiasm of Soul, that *sine Frenzy*, as SHAKESPEAR calls it, *rolling from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to Heaven*, which, like an able Magician, can bring every Object of the Creation in any Shape whatever before the Reader's Eyes. This alone is Poetry, aught else is a mechanical Art of putting Syllables harmoniously together. The Gentleman I mean is DOCTOR AKINSIDE, the worthy Author of the *Pleasures of Imagination*, the most beautiful didactic Poem that ever adorned the English or any other Language. A Work in which the great Author has united VIRGIL's *Taste*, MILTON's Colouring, and SHAKESPEAR'S

SPEAR'S incidental Expression, with a Warmth peculiar to himself, to paint the *finest* Features of the human Mind, and the most lovely Forms of true Religion and Morality. Besides this Leader of the *Muse's* Train, we have others now living, who, in their respective Compositions, leave not only all our deceased Poets, and those of FRANCE and ITALY far behind them, but even bear the Palm away from any of their Competitors of ancient ROME; and, as HOMER describes in his Games the Steeds of DIOMEDES pressing close on the Chariot of EUMELUS, †

(" Close on EUMELUS' Back they puff'd the Wind,
 " And seem'd just mounting on his car behind,
 " Full on his Neck he feels the sultry Breeze,
 " And hov'ring o'er their stretching shadow sees)

POPE'S Transl.

they breathe in the Race on the Shoulders of their GRECIAN Masters. I should
 not

† Iliad. v.

not hesitate a moment to prefer the *Elegy in a Country Church-Yard*, written by Mr. GRAY, of *Peter-House* in Cambridge, to the best Performance, in that kind, of OVID, TIBULLUS, or PROPERTIUS. Has HORACE any moral Ode equal to Mr. NUGENT's *Ode to MANKIND*, or any descriptive one to Mr. COLLINS's *Ode to the EVENING*? I should pay Mr. MASON no Compliment to compare all the Excellencies in SENECA together to his elegant *ELFRIDA*; nor do I think I should at all degrade the ATHENIAN Stage to say, that the Palm of *tragic* Glory hangs wav'ring betwixt the conjoined Merit of SOPHOCLES's *PHILOCTETES*, and the OEDIPUS *Coloneus*, and this modern Tragedy, did not SHAKESPEAR, like a Champion of old inspired by all the Gods, step majestically in to bear it away by supernatural Power from the utmost Force of human Abilities. I dare say his *MONODY on the Death of Mr. POPE*, wherein he

has imitated the Stile of four of our *English* Poets, has given you and every Man of true Taste, more Pleasure than the joined Efforts of all the Wits in the celebrated Courts of LEO the Tenth. † There is another little Piece written by the same Author, which has no Rival in the Court of AUGUSTUS, entitled an *Ode to a Water Nymph*. These Opinions you'll say, are very bold ones to give under my Hand; but as I think I can support them by just Criticism, I shall not fear the misplac'd Imputation of being *particular*, for I am sure I shall not stand alone in my judgment. I dare say AMELIA will be pleased at my *warm* Defence of her favorite Poets, and pray tell

† These Imitations of the ancient Roman Poets FAMI-ANUS STRADA has preserved in his *Academical Prolusions*, where the Stiles of LUCAN, LUCRETIUS, CLAUDIAN, OVID, STATIUS, and VIRGIL, are imitated by JANUS PARRHASIUS, PETER BEMBO, BALTHASAR CASTILIONIUS, HERCULES STROZZA, JOVIANUS PONTANUS, and ANDREAS NAUGERIUS, as he latinizes their Names. Lib. 2, Prolus. 6.

LETTER XV. 105

tell her I shall esteem her Approbation equal to the Applause of the *French Academy* of Sciences, and would prefer to being a Member of that illustrious Society the pleasure of subscribing myself hers and

Yours, &c. &c.



LETTER

(1106)

LETTER XVI.

TO PHILETHES.

FOND as I am, PHILETHES, of the Entertainment of the Theatre, believe me I have lately received an Addition to this favourite Pleasure, and such a one as you would have participated in very greatly with me. This was no less than a total Victory over that inveterate Prejudice of our old Acquaintance MILOTOS, who (like the old Debauché in GIL BLAS that thought the Works even of Nature daily decay'd) has so frequently maintain'd that the Faculties of Mankind are much inferior to what they were in the last Generation. The old Gentleman, you know, till this Winter, has not been in Town these twenty Years, and consequently totally ignorant of the late Restoration of Nature in the Representation of Tragedy. When I mention'd my desire of waiting on him to the Play, he assented to my Proposal with his usual Chearfulness, but at the same

same time spoke with wonderful Rapture of BETTERTON, POWELL and VERBRUGGEN, and seem'd to insinuate that he should necessarily triumph in the Superiority of his Contemporaries over the modern Heroes of the Buskin. But judge what was my Satisfaction after the Play was over at his pleasureable Disappointment, when he ingenuously confess'd GARRICK was not only the best Actor he ever saw, but even exceeded the utmost Conceptions he had form'd of Theatrical Excellence. It has been the peculiar Misfortune for the Representation of Modern Tragedy, that the Subjects of it, by being mostly royal Personages, were remov'd by their Rank from the common Observation of Mankind; so that our first Players, being totally unacquainted with the Characters, perhaps notably imagin'd that Princes were of a superior Species to their Subjects, and therefore as BAYS made his Spirits talk unintelligibly, they thought their imaginary Heroes (which they had as little Conception of,

as the *Rebearfal* Poet had of aërial Beings) should mouth every Sentence inarticulately. The generality of Audiences are no more conversant with the Originals than the Players themselves; so they took this preternatural Way of speaking as inseparable from the Character of Majesty, till by Degrees, as PRIOR observes upon another Occasion,

“ Custom confirm’d what Fancy had begun,”
and the deep-ton’d Monotony became the solemn manner of *speaking* Tragedy. This was the Situation in which this great Genius found the Stage about fourteen Years ago, who, being bless’d with every internal and external Qualification for representing human kind in all its Subordinations; having, on the one hand, a sound Judgment, an elegant Taste, a lively Fancy, with the most penetrating Discernment into the inmost Recesses of the Heart; and, on the other, an expressive Countenance, an Eye full of Lustre, a fine Ear, a most musical and articulate Voice, with an uncommon Power to modulate it with ease

ease to every Transition of Passion; he restor'd Nature to her lawful Empire upon the Stage, and taught us by the Conviction of our sympathizing Souls, that Kings themselves were *Men*, and *felt* like the rest of their Species. — From a Line in HORACE's Epistle to AUGUSTUS, I am inclinable to think that ROSCIUS was among the ROMANS what GARRICK is amongst us, and that QUIN likewise in Contradistinction may be consider'd as the Modern ÆSOPUS.

Quæ gravis Æsopus, quæ doctus Roscius egit.

In this place the Epithet *doctus*, contrasted to *gravis*, the deep Cadence of ÆSOP, means that ROSCIUS was *skilful* in the Transition of one Passion to another, and had a wonderful Happiness in accommodating himself to a Variety of Characters in Tragedy; whereas ÆSOPUS was suited only, by his sonorous full Voice and graver Action, to one particular Species of Characters. The Epithet *gravis*, applied to ÆSOPUS, has led the Commentators into a Mistake concerning the Talents

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lents of Roscius; they imagine, because the one is call'd the *deep-cadenc'd* Actor, that the other in Contradistinction must have been *only* an Actor of Comedies. Their Authority for such a Supposition seems to be this Sentence of QUINCTILIAN. ROSCIUS *citator*, ÆSOPUS *gravior*, *quod ille comædias, hic tragædias egit.* † But QUINCTILIAN, considering the distance of Time he liv'd from these famous Players, might possibly know as little of the Matter as themselves; but that they were both mistaken in this Point may be collected from TULLY, who celebrates his inimitable Action as a Tragic Player in the third Book *De Oratore*, as he had occasionally instanc'd him, in the preceding Books upon the same Subject, as the faultless Pattern for the Representation of human Nature in its comic Moods. So excellent was this great Man in the Scenic Art, that his Name at length became, as
we

† Lib. 11. cap. 3.

we learn from the same Author, the Pro-
 verbial Criterion of Perfection in every
 Art and Science, infomuch that whoever
 grew remarkably eminent in any, was
 call'd the ROSCIUS of his Profession. *Ita-*
que hoc jamdiu est consecutus, ut, in quo
quisque artificio excelleret, is in suo genere
Roscius diceretur. § Considering the De-
 light and Use that accrue to a rational
 Creature, from observing a natural Repre-
 sentation of the Passions by which his
 own Species is perpetually agitated, and
 consequently the Effect that a well-regu-
 lated Stage must have upon the Taste of a
 whole Nation, I am pleas'd that both
 the *Roman* and *English* ROSCIUS have
 been so highly applauded and esteem'd in
 their respective Countries, and that the
 greatest Men in both have not only been
 enchanted with 'em upon the Stage, but
 have taken Delight to rank 'em among
 their Friends in private Society. — I have
 much

† Cicer. de Orat. lib. 1.

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much to say to you about some *Italian Buffoonery* they are exhibiting at one of our Theatres, but shall reserve that till I have the Pleasure of seeing you, which, I have the Satisfaction to hear, will be very soon.

I am, &c. &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

TO EUGENIO.

GREAT is the Joy I feel, EUGENIO, that you so highly relish the Conversation of my Friend EUPHEMIUS, more especially too as I was the fortunate Person who introduc'd you to each other, for which, I must insist upon it, you are both of you greatly indebted to me. I think indeed EUPHEMIUS is bless'd with a Grace in Conversation, and a *Taste* in Society, superior to any Man with whom I ever had the Happiness of being acquainted. There arises from the Vivacity of his Fancy, the Delicacy of his Sentiments, and the beautiful tho' unaffected Arrangement of his Words, deliver'd with a Freedom of Countenance and Sweetness of Voice, such an inexpressible Charm as pleasingly bewitches the Attention of

I

all

all who hear him. He can descant upon serious Affairs with the most becoming Air of Gravity and Consideration, without the least Mixture of Austerity or Philosophical Affectation; and in the more easy Hours of social Pleasure, he can raise innocent and instructive Mirth from the slightest Accident that happens, and convert the most common Subjects into a thousand Turns of Wit and Humour. One would imagine that SHAKESPEAR had been acquainted intimately with such a Man, when he drew in so lively a manner the Character of BIRON in his *Love's Labour's lost*,

“ ———— A merrier Man,
 “ Within the Limits of becoming Mirth,
 “ I never spent an Hour's Talk withal.
 “ His Eye begets Occasion for his Wit;
 “ For every Object that the one doth catch,
 “ The other turns to a Mirth-moving Jest,
 “ Which his fair Tongue (Conceit's Expofitor)
 “ Delivers in such *apt* and *gracious* Words,
 “ That aged Ears play Truant at his Tales,
 “ And younger Hearings are quite ravished;
 “ So sweet and voluble is his Discourse”.

Act 1.

But

But his chief Excellence consists in addressing the Fair, when I have heard flow from him, as HOMER phrases it,

— ἐπεὶ νιφάδες αἶσαν εὐκρότα χεῖμασιν ὅτιν.

Iliad. lib. Γ. lin. 222.

or, as Mr. POPE translates it, [Words]

“ Soft as the Fleeces of descending Snows,”

which beautiful Expression DRYDEN has copied and greatly improv'd, when he applies it to the soft Subject I am speaking of, making LEONORA, in his *Spanish Fryar*, describe the Addressee of TORRISMOND in the following manner;

“ But when he spoke what tender Words he said,

“ So softly, that like Flakes of feather'd Snow

“ They melted as they fell. Act 1.

This softly Breathing the Fervor of one Soul into another, is an Art in which EUPHEMIUS is so happily skilled, that *Insensibility* herself, in the shape of a Woman, would almost lose her Nature in hearing him, and perceive the pleasing

Infection, would he attempt the Miracle. I have often observed, that this *tasteful* turn in Conversation prevails only in those of our own Sex, who have conversed much with the more sensible Part of the other. OTWAY justly says,

“ We had been Brutes without them ;

for let a Man's Erudition be ever so profound, his Fancy lively, and Judgment solid, this Grace, which is not to be described, will be wanting, if his Soul has not been refined, and his Tongue attuned to this sweet Melody by an habitual Intercourse with these fair Preceptors.—We are told that VOITURE was as remarkably happy in Conversation as in his epistolary Writings. This must be attributed to his Intimacy with Mademoiselles PAULET and RAMBOUILLET, and the Countess DE SABLE, more than to the Advantage of being a Friend to the learned COSTAR. A Comparison
of

of this Author's Letters with those of his Rival BALSAC, plainly evince the truth of this Observation. The easy Air, the happy Sprightliness, and tasteful Turn of Expression in the Compositions of the former, discover the Man of the World educated in Courts, and polish'd by that advantageous Collision with the brightest Part of our Species; whilst laboured Language, and an Affectation in Sentiment, inform us frequently, without the help of History, that the other led the life of a Recluse in the Country. Hence it appears from the different Productions of two Geniuses of equal *natural* Talents, that more Taste and Elegance in Writing is to be acquired in a circle of Beauties at PARIS, than in a *learned* Society of Capuchins in a Convent at ANGOULEME. — Pray tell the Ladies at — that I am now more desirous than ever to get a corner in your Heart, as I would have every Place open to me where they

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they enter; especially where they *reign*
with such unlimited Power. This you
owe me; for you can never make more
room for me there, than you will find
for yourself in the Heart of

Your, &c. &c.



L E T T E R

LETTER XVIII.

TO ARISTUS.

I Have spent the last Week, ARISTUS, in the highest Luxury a human Soul is capable of receiving. I need not explain what that Luxury was, when I inform you that I have been with that truly great Man AGATHOCLES at his delightful Seat in the Country; whose Accomplishments and refined Humanity ennoble him infinitely more than that high Rank he inherits from a Race of unsullied Ancestors. Tho' AGATHOCLES was born to the first Honours a Subject can enjoy, supported by a Fortune few under Princes possess, he neither does, nor has occasion to value himself upon either, any farther than they empower him to gratify that most exquisite of all Sensations, which the glowing Heart receives in relieving our Fellow-Creatures. Did the Great con-

sider that they might descend, like the Dew of Heaven, to cherish desponding Merit, to comfort the Afflicted, to protect and redress the Injured, and to support with chearful Sustenance the helpless Poor, surely this Imitation of the most amiable Attribute belonging to the ALMIGHTY, is more worthy of their Ambition than all the mighty Titles the fawning East bestows on it's haughty Monarchs. The most glorious Character in all the *Mahometan* History is that of OMAR, the ninth Caliph of the Race of MERWAN. His Life was one continued Act of Charity and Benevolence; a happy Prelude of his Reign was seen at his Coronation, for History tells us that he gave from off his Back, as soon as the Ceremony of the Inauguration was over, his Imperial Robe adorned with Jewels of an immense Value, even as he was descending down the Steps from the Throne, as an Alms to be distributed among the Indigent. O ARISTUS, I more envy
OMAR

OMAR this tasteful Sacrifice of Grandeur to Benevolence, (for the Action may be considered thus emblematically) than the dazzling Splendor of all the Lords of the vast OTTOMAN Empire! — But to return to AGATHOCLES. Whilst I was at his Castle, which, like the Queen of the Country, overlooks the Subject Vales around it, I thought myself from the lofty Situation of the Place, and the uncommon Goodness that perpetually reigned there, under the Protection of a Being of a superior Order; or not unlike to our first Parent, as described by MILTON, on the Top of a high Mountain, receiving Instruction from the Angel MICHAEL: and indeed often having entertained my Senses with the most tasteful Productions of Art and Science, and my Heart with the Contemplation of Goodness, I could not refrain from bursting out into poor ADAM's Exclamation,

“ How shall I part, and whither wander down

“ Into a lower World; to this obscure,

“ And wild? how shall I breathe in other Air

“ Less pure, accusom'd to immortal Fruits?

Parad. Lost, Book the xi.

tho'

Tho' the Taste of this great Man is truly noble and refined in imparadising (if I may use the Word) the Region round him; in the Collection of his Pictures; in the Oeconomy of his Family; and the Choice of his Pleasures; a Taste for a superior Accomplishment, I mean that *Grace* of Charity with which he accompanies every Word or Act of Benevolence, attracts the more particular Regard of Mankind, yet leaves them in Suspence to decide which is most lovely, the Deed of Goodness, or the manner of performing it. Without this happy Talent, Munificence stabs a Dagger into the Breast of those she intends to relieve, with one Hand, while she extends the Purse with the other. This will be fully exemplified in the following short Story. PANDOLFO MALATESTA the Sovereign of REMINI, in the time of Pope ALEXANDER VIth, was the richest Prince in ITALY, who, after having spent a despicable Life in the arms of Luxury, was reduced, by a me-
rited

rited reverse of Fortune, to seek for an
 Asylum at last in a common Hospital at
 BOLOGNA. The Account goes, that
 this Tyrant, for such he was, being ex-
 pelled from his Dominions, and perse-
 cuted by his Enemies, in pain and want
 fled to the above-mentioned City, where
 at that very Time dwelt a Nobleman
 named PIETRO DEL SACCIO, a Native
 of REMINI, who some few Years before
 had been driven from his Country by
 the Tyranny of MALATESTA, who un-
 justly seized upon all his Possessions in
 that Principality, and put many of his
 Family to the Sword. When word was
 brought to this Nobleman, that the late
 Usurper was now in his Power, and that
 he might revenge those Injuries by deli-
 vering him up to CÆSAR BORGIA, or by
 killing him with his own Hand, the ex-
 asperated *Italian* with ingenious Malice
 replied, " Yes, I will now fully revenge
 " the Injuries I have sustained ; I will do
 " more than kill PANDOLFO, for I
 " will

“ will order him to be carried to the
“ Hospital I endowed myself, and let the
“ Tyrant know that the wretched Means
“ of protracting a miserable Being, is
“ owing to the Bounty of PIETRO DEL
“ SACCIO.”—Such Cruelty will always
attend ill-conducted Bounty, however
otherwise intended! yet methinks Nature
leads us so strongly to administer every
Application of Humanity, with that *lenient*
Hand so requisite to make even Relief ac-
ceptable to an ingenuous Mind, that I
wonder a proper manner does not always
accompany a charitable Action; nay far-
ther, I am inclinable to think, where it
does not, the Deed cannot proceed from
a tender Sympathy of a Fellow-Creature’s
Distress, but from an Ostentation of
superfluous Possessions. Of all Taste may
Heaven bestow on me chiefly this! that
when I rock the Cradle of the Orphan, or
wipe the gushing Tear from the Eyes of
the Widow, I may administer both in so
silent a manner, that neither they should
feel the Pain of receiving, nor the tainting
Breath

Breath of the World's Promulgation disturb the quiet Purpose of my Heart, brooding over it's unspeakable Transport in sacred Secrecy! My Love to LEONORA, to whom I ought to add something in answer to her last Letter; but Ideas of Compassion are now work'd up so strongly in my Mind, and those *Dew-drops of Tenderness*, as she called them (when I wept over the little Foundling nurs'd at a neighbouring Cottage) rise so plentifully that I must abruptly subscribe myself

Your, &c. &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X I X .

T O C R I T O P H I L U S .

I Very readily concur in your Opinion, CRITOPHILUS, that a Work of Criticism is the most difficult to be executed with a proper Taste of any literary Composition whatever. There is something so repugnant to the Pride of Mankind in general, something so detraactive from the supposed Sagacity of every Reader, to pretend to inform by the dry Method of Precept, that except an Author has all the Delicacy and artful Address imaginable, to seem to *accompany* the Judgments of of those he writes for, rather than to *lead* them into Discoveries, in such a Performance, he will meet with that kind of contemptuous Treatment, which those good-natured People receive, who are ready to give their unask'd Advice in the common Concerns of Life upon every Occasion. It is highly necessary therefore,
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in such kind of Writings, *to sacrifice liberally to the GRACES*, without whose Inspiration Learning will there degenerate into Pedantry, and the Precepts even of Wisdom pass unrelished. An Author of a didactic Piece cannot be too circumspect, not only in the tasteful manner of addressing his Reader, but in the inferior Parts too of Composition, that the Choice of his Words, and the Arrangement of his Periods, may adorn, and not degrade the Delicacy of his Subject. For want of this Refinement we have many lamentable Instances of able Scholars having succeeded very ill in Works, where they have betrayed the greatest want of Taste and Genius, whilst they were unfortunately laborious in endeavouring to point out those Excellencies in others. I need go no farther for a Proof of this than Mr. ANTHONY BLACKWALL'S † *Introduction to the Classics*,

† He was a Schoolmaster at Derby. His Book was published in 1718.

Classics. This Man was what is generally called a good Scholar, that is, he was grammatically Master of the two dead Languages *Greek* and *Latin*, and had *read over* all the ancient Authors in both; but not having by Nature or Acquisition that happy Taste of distinguishing Beauties, nor a Digestion (if I may so say) to assimilate the Sense of others into his own Understanding, his Conceptions were as crude as his Address and Stile were unpleasing. I remember the good old Schoolmaster, for such he was, in one place informs us, speaking of HERODOTUS and LIVY, that “ these two Princes of *Greek* “ and *Roman* History, *tell a Story*, and “ *make up* a Description with inexpressible “ Grace; and so delicately *mix great* and “ *little* Circumstances, that there is both “ the utmost Dignity and Pleasure in “ it”†. I leave you to animadvert on the Grossness of these Metaphors, and pass on
to

† Indrod. to the Claf. p. 26.

Period, (two Faults he reasonably might be expected to avoid, when the justly admired Ancients were so strongly in his Mind) he has huddled together his undistinguished Commendations of the *Greek* and *Latin*, and so unjustly given the Preference of the latter to our own copious Language, with that trite profound air of ridiculous Erudition, as must unavoidably have those Effects upon his different Readers, which Mr. POPE describes in his in-
parable Essay on Criticism,

“ Such labour’d nothings in so grave a Style,

“ Amaze th’ unlearn’d, and make the learned smile.”

But let the Peace of Dulness brood over such Lumber, and let us turn our Eyes to a more delightful Object, the revival of the true Spirit of ancient Criticism in the Works of some illustrious modern Geni-
 uses, who tread in the Steps of their ador’d Masters as far as they went, and then penetrate deeper into the Laurel Grove of Science than any of their Predecessors
 ever

ever ventur'd. The first I shall mention is the great Author † of *Reflections Critiques sur la Peinture et la Poesie*; a Work, which, in the Hands of an ordinary Writer, would have been an unentertaining String of dry Reflections upon those Arts only, but under the Magic of his masterly Pen, comprehends the most judicious Observations upon every Idea of the human Mind, in each simple and complicated Appearance. The next is the ingenious Author of the *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of HOMER* ‡, in which he has clearly demonstrated by irrefragable Reasons, drawn from a Conjunction of moral and natural Causes, that such a Poet never could arise since him in the space of two thousand seven hundred Years, for want of that happy Concurrence of Circumstances, without which even this immortal Genius him-

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self

† Monfr. l'Abbé du Bos.

‡ Mr. Bl—— a Scotch Gentleman, who labours under the misfortune to have a similar Name to the Schoolmaster above-cited.

self might have been in an inferior Rank of the Muses Train. The latest that has improved our Taste and enriched our Language, is the elegant Writer * of those *instructive Notes*, and entertaining *Commentary on HORACE's* two critical Epistles, the one to the PISOS, commonly called the *Art of Poetry*, the other to AUGUSTUS; to the latter of which is subjoined a *Discourse on Poetical Imitation*, wherein he has nobly defended the Cause of congenial Fancies in all Ages, against the ill-grounded Clamor of popular Ignorance and Envy, with the deep Spirit of Philosophy, and the warm Zeal of a Lover.—We find in the Works of these great Men, a pleasing Power of rendering every Subject interesting to the human Heart, by bringing home to our Breasts Objects seemingly the most remote, and uniting a Train of captivating Circumstances, arising naturally out of their Plans, which animates all their Writings,

* Mr. H——d of Emanuel College, Cambridge.

Writings, not unlike the amiable Group of Figures in one of POUSSIN's Landscapes, which gives a silent Lesson of Morality unawares to the Beholder, who no more than the Shepherds in the Picture, § imagin'd to find, in that *Arcadian* Scene, any thing but shady Groves, clear Fountains, verdant Meadows, and other com-

K 3 mon

§ The Picture here hinted at is describ'd by the ingenious ABBE DU BOS above-mention'd, which I will give the Reader in his own Words. After having observ'd that it was a Landscape in ancient ARCADIA, he continues ; “ Le tableau dont je parle représente le paysage
 “ d'une contrée riante. Au milieu l'on voit le monument
 “ d'une jeune fille morte a la fleur de son age : c'est ce
 “ qu' on connoit par la Statue de cette fille couchée sur
 “ le tombeau a la maniere des anciens. L' inscription
 “ Sepulchrale n'est que quatre mots latins : Je vivois ce-
 “ pendant in Arcadie, *et in Arcadia* ego. Mais cette in-
 “ scription si courte fait faire les plus serieuses réflexions
 “ a deux jeunes garçons et a deux jeunes filles parées de
 “ guirlandes de fleurs, et qui paroissent avoir rencontré
 “ ce monument si triste en des lieux où l'on devine bien
 “ qu' ils ne cherchoient pas un objet affligeant. Un d'
 “ entre eux fait remarquer aux autres cette inscription en
 “ la montrant du doigt, et l' on ne voit plus sur leur vi-
 “ sage, a travers l' affliction qui s'en empare, que les
 “ restes d'une joye expirante. On s' imagine entendre les
 “ réflexions de ces jeunes personnes sur la mort qui n' e-
 “ pargne in l' age ni la beauté, et contre laquelle les
 “ plus heureux climats n' ont point d' azile. On se fi-
 “ gure ce qu' elles vont se dire de touchant lorsqu' elles
 “ seront revenues de la premiere surprise, et l' on l' ap-
 “ plique a soi-même et a ceux pour qui l' on s' interesse.
 Refl. Crit. Sect. VI.

mon Assemblages of a rural Prospect.—I am much oblig'd to you for your ingenious Observations upon that ancient Sepulchral Inscription I lately sent you; nor would I have you asham'd if hereafter it should prove the ingenious Imitation of some Modern, for you know the great SCALIGER himself was impos'd upon in this manner by MURET, which was acknowledg'd by all the Learned to be a greater Proof of the Abilities of the latter, than of the want of any critical Acumen in the former. I shall expect to meet you at the Grand Emporium very soon, therefore shall add no more than that I am

Your, &c. &c.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

TO EUPHEMIUS.

JOY to the World, EUPHEMIUS, that a fresh Spring of almost inexhaustible Pleasure is open'd, now that mythological Veil is taken away which envelop'd the Wisdom of the Ancients. But I little thought, when I sent you the ingenious Professor's Book †, that I should embarrass myself in a cruel Alternative, either of denying a Request of your's on one hand, or of exposing my want of Abilities to you in attempting to comply with it on the other. The Reason you assign for desiring me to draw out a *Mythological Genealogy* of TASTE, in the manner of

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the

† *Letters concerning Mythology* (written by the Author of the *Enquiry into the Life and Writings of HOMER*) to which Work, in Comparison of the other, we may apply those Words of TULLY, Non est enim, ut in arce poni possit, quasi illa Minerva Phidix: sed tamen, ut ex eadem officinâ exisse appareat.

the Ancients, would hold good that I should turn the Tables upon you, and leave the Task in far abler Hands: for the ingenious Observations you made, whilst we were reading over together the four first Books of DIODORUS SICULUS, convince me I should spend my Time more usefully in reading an entertaining Fable of yours on this Subject, than in attempting to compose one myself. But as the Friendship subsisting betwixt us demands that I should run the hazard of giving you a disadvantageous Opinion of my Capacity, rather than of my Inclination to satisfy your Desire, I will endeavour to recall some Idea of that Philosophical Spirit which discovers itself in all your Reflections upon the Compositions of the Ancients, and entertain you, as Dependents upon Great Men do their Patrons, with a Banquet of your own providing.

In a Cave of a Mountain in the Island of CRETE dwelt a Nymph called CONTEMPLATION, sprung, as the *Mythologists* report,

port, from JUPITER, the greatest of the Gods; for, according to their Accounts, she was conceiv'd and leapt forth from the Brain of her Cœlestial Parent, as PALLAS did, whilst he was deeply attentive in beholding the Beauties of the Creation. In this sacred Retirement the Nymph had liv'd many Ages, whither several ancient Poets, Heroes, Philosophers, and Legislators frequently resorted, for no one ever left her without receiving the utmost Happiness from her divine Precepts. As APOLLO was wandering one Day over the Top of this Mountain, he chanc'd to light upon this heavenly Maid, whilst she was busied in her usual Employment of meditating on this stupendous System, and the divine Perfections of the great Creator of the World. Smitten with her Charms, he immediately descended into the Cave, and having enjoy'd her, she bore him a Son, whom the God nam'd EUDOXUS, alluding to the noble Ideas which fill'd the Mother's Mind when he first beheld her. 'Tis said,

said, as the Nymph CONTEMPLATION was one Night counting the Stars, and describing on the Sand with a Wand their different Situations and Motions, having left the Child not far off on a Bed of Violets, that the Nightingale came and cover'd him with Laurel Leaves, and lull'd him to Sleep with the Melody of her Song, softly modulated to the tender Ear of the list'ning Infant. About this Time the DELPHIAN ORACLE declar'd that a Ray of Light was descended from the SUN, and being discern'd from that mighty Luminary should be spread all over GREECE, ITALY, and part of ASIA-MINOR, for many Ages. When EUDOXUS had pass'd the Years of Childhood, APOLLO being desirous not only to instruct him in the abstruser Knowledge of his Mother, but to unite in his Education a thorough Relish of such other Arts and Sciences, as might render him a Benefactor to Mankind in general, and his favourite Nation the GREEKS in particular, he took the Boy to his own belov'd Seat
of

of Retirement, and committed his Darling Charge to the Care of the NINE MUSES, and their Sisters the Heavenly GRACES. Here EUDOXUS was instructed, first how the Great ARCHITECT of the Creation divided the warring Elements, and out of CHAOS form'd by his Plastic Mandate the unmeasurable Frame of this stupendous Universe. Next, how the refulgent Source of Light and Heat, the Sun, sprung thro' the blue Serene of Heaven, and being fix'd immoveable in the Center of all, drew round his glorious Orb those inferior Globes, whose certain and unerring Courses, in unchangeable Periods of Time, form that ætherial Harmony imperceptible to all Beings but the Inhabitants of Heaven. Then he was told how the oblique Position of this our Earth in its annual Progress caus'd the delightful Revolutions of Seasons; how soft descending Rains and genial Warmths of the Spring, open'd the relenting Earth, call'd forth the infant Buds, and afterwards unfolded all the vegetable Pride of Flowers
and

and Blossoms; how the more perpendicular Rays of Heat ripened the rising Harvest in Summer; how Autumn gloried in the regal Hue of it's purple Vintage; and lastly, why the sterile Winter itself was as useful to Mortals as the other teeming Seasons, for affording in its cold Embraces the requisite Rest to the sleeping Vegetables, which thereby gain fresh Vigour to renew their Species, and to perpetuate Sustenance to all Animals, in the same Rotation, till Time shall be no more. From this general Knowledge of Nature, he was led to enquire into the Construction of particular Parts, the Bodies of Animals, and especially those of the human Race; to discover the Causes of Pain and Disease, and by what Methods to restore them to their pristine Beauty and internal Harmony called Health, and to recall the natural original Sensations of Ease and Pleasure. When the DAUGHTERS of MEMORY had fully instructed EUDOXUS, as APOLLO had directed them, in every Branch of this Knowledge, they brought him

him by degrees to conceive that an æthè-
 rial Spirit was for a while united with the
 human Body; how it was agitated by
 different Passions whilst in this Conjunction;
 and then after Solution, the Body should
 return to it's kindred Dust, out of which
 it was form'd, and the Soul to a separate
 State of Happiness or Misery, according
 as it acted in this probationary State on
 Earth. Having taken this View of Man
 in the Abstract with all his Wants and
 Infirmities, the MUSES, last of all, gave
 their Disciple a thorough Insight into the
 human Race in Society, where, by the
 Goodness of the first Author of all Things,
 these very Deficiencies of Individuals
 united the whole Species, and the mutual
 Supply of each others Wants link'd all
 Degrees into one irrefragable Chain toge-
 ther, each different Part of which recipro-
 cally depended upon the other, from the
 Beginning to the End. They taught him
 too, by way of Amusement, the use and
 power of Music, Painting, and Poetry,
 the first of which could assuage mental

Agony;

Agony; the second revive past Pleasures in beholding beautiful Objects; and the third inspire with a true love of Virtue, by perpetuating the rever'd Memory of those who had been Ornaments to our Species. EUDOXUS, being at length quite accomplished in every Art and Science, became enamoured of one of the GRACES, who returned his Passion with mutual Ardor. One Day they took an Opportunity, whilst the other two were busied in sporting with FLORA and her train of ZEPHYRS, to gratify their Desires in a Cave of Mount IDA. The Offspring of their Embraces was a Daughter, whom the fond Parents named CALOCAGATHIA. This Nymph, who inherited all the Knowledge of her Father, and all the *Charms* of her Mother, became as she grew up the chief Favorite both of Gods and Men. In the celestial Banquets she always sat next to VENUS, and on Earth had the Honour attributed to her of inspiring whatever was uncommonly beautiful in Morals, Arts, and Sciences.

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In this manner, my dear EUPHEMIUS, the ancient Mythologists would have drawn the Genealogy of TASTE, making her the Daughter of one of the GRACES begot by KNOWLEDGE, who was the Son of CONTEMPLATION. The Truth of this figurative Representation you may easily prove, by comparing it with the History of your own Mind, where you can trace the Goddess from her Birth, to the full Charms of her ripest Age. Adieu, my Friend, and may she still attend you thro' Life in every Pursuit, whether in Arts, Sciences, Morals and Religion. I am

Your, &c. &c.

F I N I S.





